INSIDE

New Bands
6-Page Special

GLASTONBURY

The Preview 99

WESTERN
Daily Press special publication

Rhythm of the

DOWN on Worthy Farm, it's another day, running as always to the eternal rhythms of the countryside. The 275 cows – almost all Friesians – have been milked, just as other herds have been on dozens of similar farms across Somerset and the West Country.

Oh, and there's been an angry fax from the manager of a very famous rock band which demands the immediate attention of the farmer, one Michael Eavis.

In some ways this is an ordinary – if highly successful – dairy farm; but the farmer is extraordinary. For almost three decades he has been combining his day job with organising a world-famous rock festival, and it's still getting bigger. It's also getting close ...

So the cows will soon be heading for what is normally their winter quarters to make way for more than 100,000 people who will be arriving, to see a typically eclectic Glastonbury bill ranging from R.E.M. to Al Green via Hole, Orbital and Ian Dury, not to mention everything else that makes the Festival unique.

These last couple of weeks should be a special time for Michael, who admits he loves the excitement of building a city in the fields, which for a few precious days is the biggest community in Somerset.

But this year there is sadness, as his wife Jean died last month after a three-month battle against cancer. Michael immediately announced that the Festival would go ahead as a tribute to her.

Michael, who met Jean in a fish and chip shop queue in Glastonbury, says: "She was strong, a proper matriarch. She didn't mince her words, and she delivered results all the time."

by Matthew George

In the farmhouse, there are huge piles of letters and cards from well-wishers, showing just how much she meant to so many people.

Before last year's Festival, Michael had said that after a Millennium event, he and Jean would take time out in autumn 2000 to take stock, and decide whether to carry on. Now that he will not be able to spend time with Jean, he thinks he may carry on longer, as he can't imagine retiring on his own.

So the show goes on, and part of the Festival legend is the way certain bands seize the day, grabbing the chance to write themselves into its history – and give themselves a huge career boost as well.

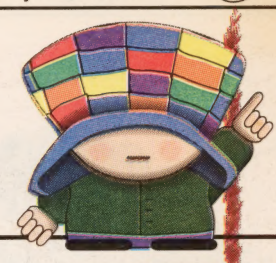
Michael recalls Pulp in 1995, late-night Saturday headliners after The Stone Roses dropped out, moving into the big league as 20,000 people standing in a field sang along to Common People.

Two years later Radiohead held a vast Pyramid Stage crowd spellbound in the same slot, while 1998 saw a Friday night Other Stage performance which had thousands singing and dancing in the heaviest rain yet seen at Glastonbury.

As Michael recalls: "Last year it was Cerys (Matthews, of Catatonia). Look at her now – they are enormous now ..."

the-raft.com music matters

farm PREVIEW



contents

FRIDAY

r.e.m. 4

kula shaker, hole 5

gomez 6

ian dury 7

beautiful south, blondie, bjorn again 12

jazz 8

acoustic 9

dance special 10, 11

NEW BANDS

where the stars are born 13

dark star, gay dad, add n to x, death in vegas 14

delakota, chicks, the doves, regular fries 15

one lady owner, nojahoda, little mothers, wilco, ooberman, 16, 17

toploader, dodgy, ultrasound, david gray 18

SATURDAY

travis, texas 20

orbital, paul oakenfold 21

manic street preachers 22

the cardigans, straw, super furry animals 23

mishka, joe strummer 24

SUNDAY

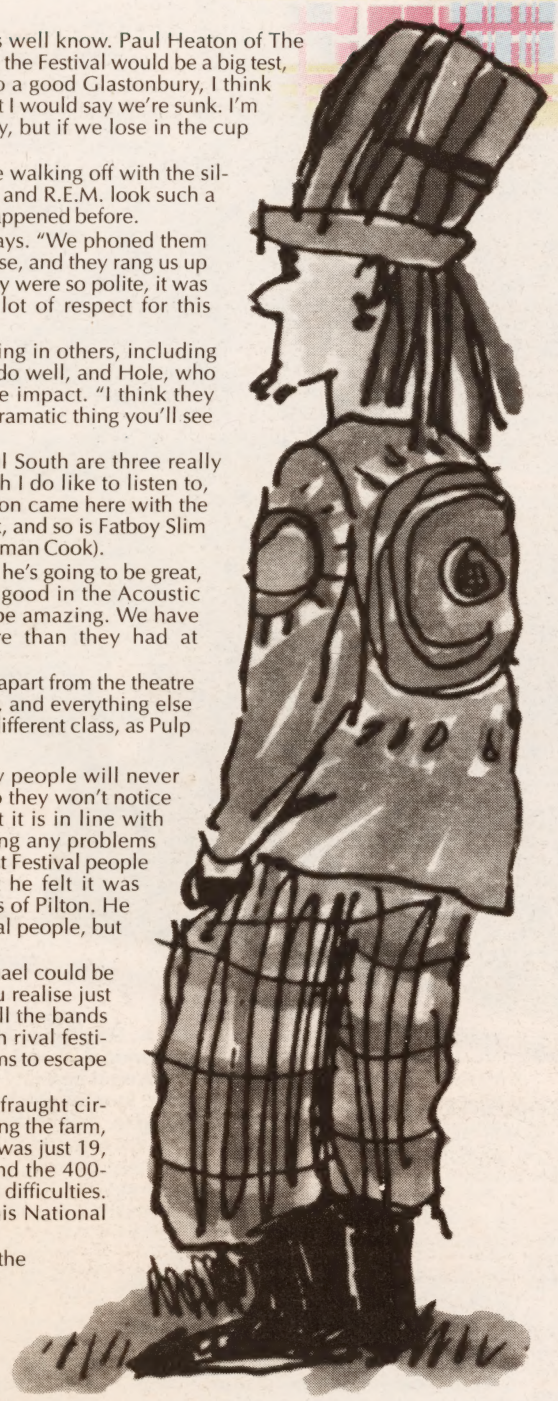
the corrs, feeder, dogstar 25

skunk anansie, mercury rev 26, 27

fun lovin' criminals, al green 28

mogwai, lenny kravitz 29

green fields 24



So the prize is there, as the bands well know. Paul Heaton of The Beautiful South talked of how playing the Festival would be a big test, after cancelling some gigs: "If we do a good Glastonbury, I think we'll make up the support. If we don't I would say we're sunk. I'm sure we CAN do a good Glastonbury, but if we lose in the cup final, it's the end of the season for us."

So who does Michael think will be walking off with the silverware this time? Well, Glastonbury and R.E.M. look such a perfect match, it's amazing it hasn't happened before.

"R.E.M. actually rang us up," he says. "We phoned them up for years and never got any response, and they rang us up this time and said 'can we play?'. They were so polite, it was incredible. The Americans have a lot of respect for this show."

The presence of R.E.M. helped bring in others, including Patti Smith, who Michael expects to do well, and Hole, who he believes will have a considerable impact. "I think they should do really well, and the most dramatic thing you'll see all weekend could be Courtney Love.

"R.E.M., the Manics and Beautiful South are three really good headliners. The Beautiful South I do like to listen to, they're very easy to enjoy. Paul Heaton came here with the Housemartins, and this year he's back, and so is Fatboy Slim (former Housemartins bass player Norman Cook).

"Al Green will do a Tony Bennett – he's going to be great, and Lonnie Donegan is going to be good in the Acoustic Tent. And then the Dance Tent will be amazing. We have more stuff in the Dance Tent here than they had at Homelands ..."

So plenty to look forward to, quite apart from the theatre and circus, 100 acres of green fields, and everything else that marks Glastonbury out as being different class, as Pulp might say.

There's so much to do that many people will never make it to the Pyramid Stage, so they won't notice it's been moved slightly so that it is in line with Glastonbury Tor, hopefully preventing any problems with noise. Michael confides that most Festival people didn't want to move the stage, but he felt it was important for the sake of the villagers of Pilton. He says he can try to persuade the Festival people, but notes: "It's not a committee ..."

Indeed not, although you feel Michael could be pretty persuasive. Talking to him, you realise just how shrewd he is – he knows how all the bands are doing and what's happening with rival festivals, and nothing at Worthy Farm seems to escape him.

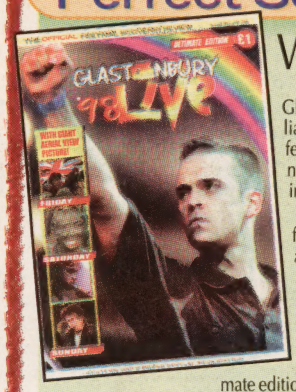
One reason for that could be the fraught circumstances in which he started running the farm, after the death of his father when he was just 19, and was at sea. He came back to find the 400-acre farm, in his family since 1894, in difficulties. And he was supposed to be doing his National Service ...

"For two years I got up at 4am for the milking, then went off to do a day shift at a coal mine, pushing the trucks in – I was called a runner. Then I came back to do the evening milking. But I got £13 a week, in between milking, and it did help financially, and I avoided National Service."

Perhaps after that, dealing with the angry managers of rock bands isn't so tough after all.

Jean Eavis was the Mother of Glastonbury. She cared passionately about the festival and the welfare of every one of you. And she cared deeply about Worthy Farm, too, and at the end of the event every year she would help the army of volunteers to tidy things up and remove the litter.
The best tribute you could pay Jean would be to have a wonderful, happy and safe time. And try to keep Worthy Farm looking as beautiful as she would have wanted.
CB

The Perfect Souvenir



Want a perfect souvenir of a perfect weekend?

You've got it with Glastonbury 99Live, the brilliant, full colour review of the festival, packed with stunning pictures and great writing.

The Review, now in its fourth year, has proved such a success that we've made it even bigger - 48 pages of live action with a rush early edition available from Sunday morning.

And a definitive, ultimate edition with great pictures and reviews from all three days will be on sale from 6.00am on Monday. And it's only £1.50!

You can even mail one to a friend by filling out a simple coupon at any Information Point.

Make your festival complete — with 99Live.

credits

Artwork: TRACEY FELTHAM, DAVE SUTTON, JERRY HOLLIDAY

Editor: CHRIS BINDING (c.binding@bepp.co.uk)

FRIDAY

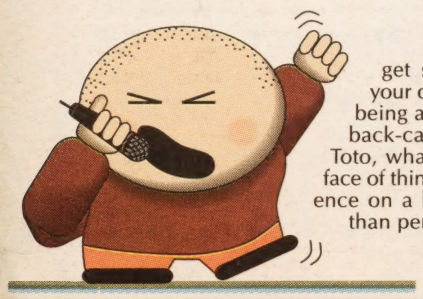
R.E.M.

One of the best R.E.M. websites is **R.E.M. - These Days** (www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Stage/9208/index.html), the work of Jonathan Young, who died tragically in 1997, aged 13. His site is still visited daily by R.E.M. fans from all corners of the globe and a fund set up in his memory helps provide computer equipment for disabled children.

R.E.M. formed in 1980 in Athens, Georgia. Despite being in the heart of the South, the town lacks the stultifying conformity and closed mind-set common to the USA's Deep South. The presence of the University of Georgia (where all the band studied) lends the town a more bohemian air than you would otherwise expect. Maybe this is, in part, why they sound the way that they do.

It would be hard to find a more commercially successful "non-commercial" band than R.E.M.. Since their early days they have resolutely done their own thing. Their first LP Murmur (1983) was a stark contrast to the bombastic schlep that was dominating the charts at the time. R.E.M., with a few other American bands that were surfacing in the early Eighties, started what Americans call 'alternative music'; bands whose music defied the safe conventions and designations beloved of the music industry. While far removed from the proto-grunge of, say, Husker Dü, R.E.M.'s early, edgy, almost opaque songs stood out a mile.

Their capacity for invention was striking from the start. Due to the difference between the welfare state in the States and the UK, American bands tend to have to earn their crust from the very start. If you can do good covers, you get work in bars, you are paid, and maybe you get some time to pour into your own music. Unfortunately being able to perform the entire back-catalogue of Van Halen, Toto, whatever, seems on the surface of things to have a malign influence on a band's creativity. Rather than perfecting their own songs, they perfect other people's songs, so you end up having many bands of technically-talented people writing cack.



R.E.M. weren't really a bunch of muso friends who decided to be in a band. At that point none of them played well enough to be called a muso. But they wanted to be in a band. Something there worked, maybe because they did stuff that they didn't know you weren't meant to do, as far as the music went. Listening to their first album, or their second, the rather more polished Reckoning (1984), really brings home what a refreshing change they represented to the charts of the day. Of course, back then they were still a cult band, either in the U.S. or Europe. However, extensive touring following the release of Fables Of The Reconstruction (1985), which they recorded in the UK, started to spread the word.

Producing an album a year for the first five years of their existence is something very few bands achieve, and each album moved the R.E.M. sound on to new levels. The obtuse, mumbled lyrics of the first few albums were increasingly at contrast to the harder, clearer, new material, but the older fans were bought along by the fact that they still did not bland out. R.E.M. retained their uniqueness and difference, you just didn't need a Ph.D. in English Literature to figure out what Michael meant anymore.

As far as doing Glastonbury goes, they're typically off-beat about things, with Peter Buck remarking that he'd quite like "not to be a headline band" so they could play in the afternoon or something.

The quiet, pastoral air of Fables of the Reconstruction lead to Life's Rich Pageant (1986) which was their rockiest album thus far. With Document (1987) they achieved their first major successes both here in the UK and at home, with It's The End Of The World As We Know It (And I Feel Fine) and The One I Love.

Green (1989), with the hits Stand and Orange Crush, was the start of the second phase of the band's existence, as they entered the big boys' club and started playing stadiums. At a time when most bands start to have access to all excess, R.E.M. re-wrote the rules. Michael seemed to do whatever he could to avoid becoming a sex-symbol.

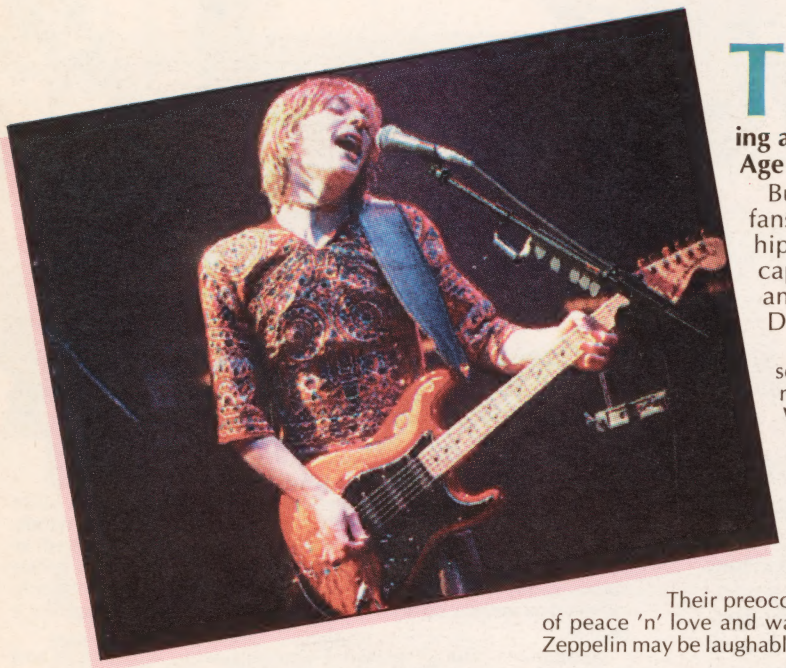
Out of Time (1991) and Automatic For The People (1992) marked a step back from the faster, more rock-orientated songs of the previous three albums. Despite the fact that they didn't tour between 1990 and 1995, the period marked R.E.M. having a huge surge in popularity, with some of the most beautiful songs in the band's repertoire becoming massive hits. To many people in the Glastonbury crowd, songs like Losing My Religion, Shiny Happy People or Man On The Moon will have been their first exposure to the band. Stipe reached a new level of maturity in his voice and with his lyrics, managing to be poignant without ever being over-sweet. Losing My Religion was a massive hit in and out of the English-speaking world, simply because even if you couldn't understand what he was saying, you knew what he meant.

Perhaps suffering from an overdose of delicate, chiming songs with lots of mandolins, Monster (1994) plugged the band back into a more direct rock sound, typified by the single What's The Frequency Kenneth?, and bought them back to the stadiums. New Adventures In Hi-Fi (1996), moved back towards the more introspective songs on the two albums before Monster, and was the last album as a four-piece. Drummer Bill Berry (who was taken seriously ill for a time during the Monster tour) decided to leave the band as they went into rehearsals for their latest album. For Stipe, Peter Buck and Mike Mills it wasn't just losing a drummer. It was losing a friend whom they'd worked with their entire adult lives. They considered splitting, according to Stipe for "about three minutes", before deciding they still had a lot left to do.

With their new album, Up, R.E.M. have got a whole new set of simply majestic songs for their first UK festival date. They have managed to keep going for nineteen years, yet still sound fresh and exciting with songs like Hope and Sad Professor sure to join the ranks of the favourites. As far as doing Glastonbury goes, they're typically off-beat about things, with Buck remarking that he'd quite like "not to be a headline band" so they could play in the afternoon or something.

Gyles Williams

Kula Shaker



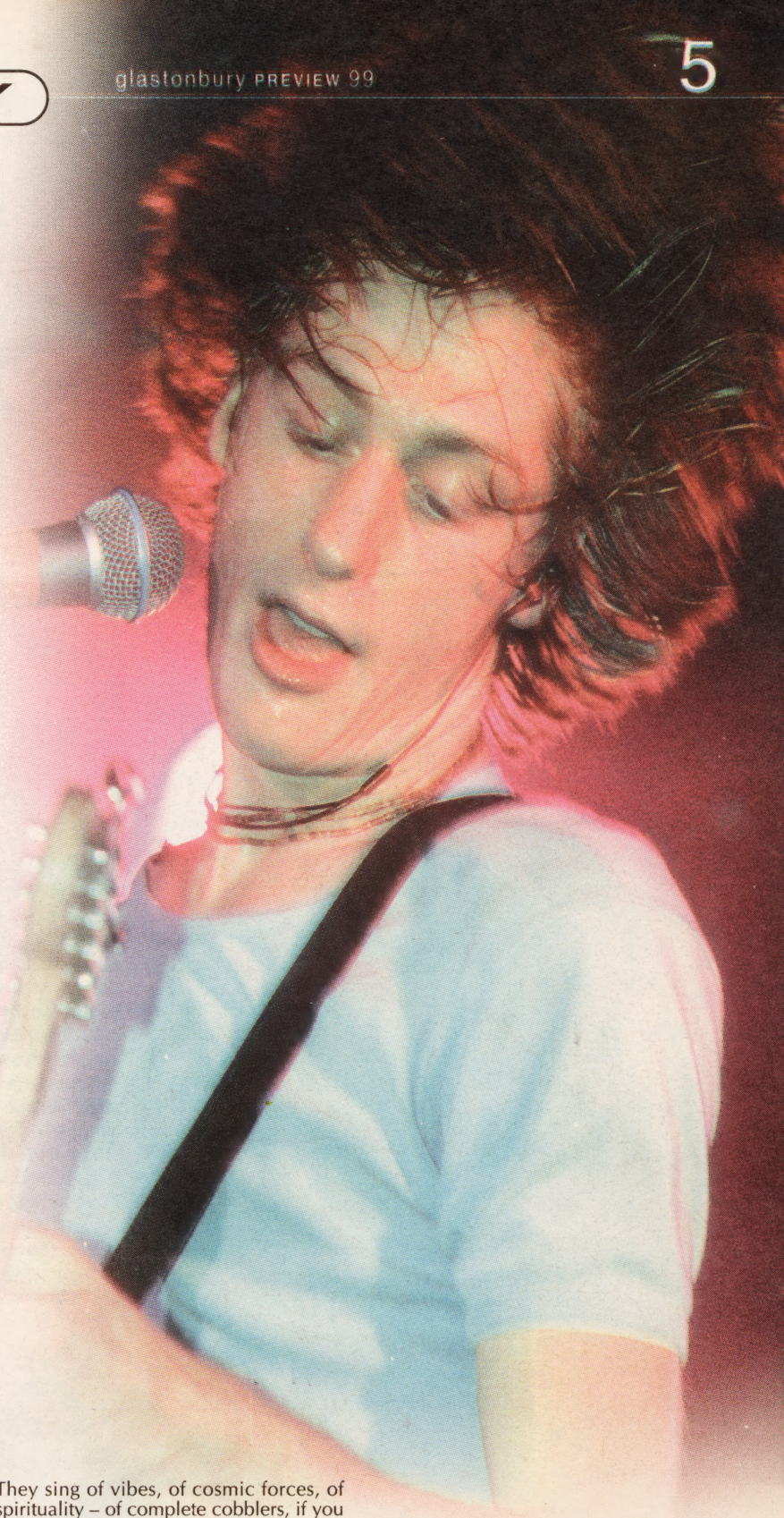
THERE'S something a little cringey about Kula Shaker; over-privileged boys, playing around with half-baked New Age mysticism. Or so it seems.

But while only the most naive of fans would dream of taking the hippy group seriously, they are capable of wonderful rock anthems. Govinda, and Hey Dude for instance.

The buying public once thought so, and debut album K sold like midge spray in The Hebrides. Whether the follow-up, Peasants, Pigs and Astronauts made quite the same splash is less certain, but you have to take your hats off to them.

For Kula Shaker have always ignored the critics, the sceptics and everyone else who found them, well, a little ridiculous.

Their preoccupation with Seventies themes of peace 'n' love and way-out subject matter a la Led Zeppelin may be laughably outdated.



They sing of vibes, of cosmic forces, of spirituality – of complete cobblers, if you ask me.

Spending a few months in India as a tourist does not turn you into the Dalai Lama, whatever you may think after a few bang lassis.

But what goes around comes around, and Kula Shaker – retro though they may be – are no more of a pastiche than the hundred and one Beatles imitators cluttering the rock scene.

OK, so the tie-die clothing, hippy hair and utterly ludicrous appearance on Top of The Pops look concocted and you may not want to listen to their CDs at home, but these fellows are a cracking live act. After all, extroverts are always the best performers.

Thrill at the raw power of their electric guitars. Laugh at their beads and silly clothes. And revel in the charismatic live performance of Crispian Mills, grandson of Sir John Mills.

The blond-haired rocker may look like a grown-up Little Lord Fauntleroy gone to seed, but on stage he is a thoroughbred rock beast, full of wild energy and howling vocals.

Peculiar, retrospective and psychedelic (man), Kula Shaker will definitely give you your money's worth.

And drummer Paul Winterhart, who comes from Shepton Mallett, just down the road from Glastonbury, should feel particularly comfortable with this venue.

Jim Pickard

congratulations to Neil and Simon on www.glastonbury-festival.co.uk
a website worthy of the name

Hole

Hole lot of love

THE critics of Hole – and there are enough – believe the band's success owes rather a lot to Nirvana's Kurt Cobain, and they are probably right.

The untimely death of the iconic grunge star brought his widow Courtney Love to international attention.

Since then, her band Hole has become an MTV-friendly, global rock outfit. Unfortunately, Hole don't walk it as well as they talk it. Even if their profile reaches the dizzy heights of Nirvana, they are unlikely to ever make such awesome music.

Hole's sound, while described by some critics as energetic and raw, could also be described as a cacaphonic din. Heavy rock without irony or melody.

Love may have changed her image from a washed out, black-eyed banshee in a frock – now she sports designer clothes and stylish hairdos.

But the songs remain the same, not a lot of fun. Not even Love's reincarnation as a glamorous film star, in The People Vs Larry Flynt, can change that, it seems.

JP

FRIDAY

gomez

YOU have to give it to the clouds. They really did make last year's festival theirs. However, there was a point early on the Friday afternoon when even they took some time out, threw on a silky poncho, knocked back a few tequilas and danced the fandango across the murky skies. And who could blame them. To be fair, it was a little difficult to turn your attention away from the satisfying warmth radiating lavishly from the Pyramid Stage.

Drafted in as last-minute subs, Gomez tapped the audience on the shoulder, gave them a knowing wink and then proceeded to massage their unsuspecting minds towards a blissfully elated climax, under a sheath of optimistically summery acoustic enchantment.

While also very current and gleaming around the edges, the sound that came from the stage was drenched in maturity and experience, held up by a collective strength that logic would have told you originated from a tight-knit group of accomplished old-time musicians with their roots in the deepest Southern states of the U.S.

Consider that they've barely made it out of their teens and hail from Southport on England's North-west coast – far from an exotic haven of concentrated musical innovation – and it only goes on to magnify their accomplishments.

Their debut album, Bring It On, was one of last year's most effective uses of imagination and deservedly won them the coveted Mercury Music Prize. It did take its lead from musical eras gone by, but scrubbed them up in order to adapt to a more demanding modern expectation. You could go so far as to say that it is one of the finest debuts of the decade. It is so together, so polished, so complete.

It was captured, for the most part, in various garages on a four-track recorder, not that you could tell. Millions of pounds and plush studios have done very little more for anyone else. At the heart of it, there were songs. Songs about love, songs about getting drunk, songs about American chat shows. But the common thread was their quality.

From the moment the introductory electronic loop of Get Miles sends thoughts rolling down an embankment of lilting rhythm, through the singles Whippin' Piccadilly and Get Myself Arrested, to the blazing propulsion of the slide guitar on Rie's Wagon, it's their ability to take you somewhere far away, somewhere as ultimately removed as you could hope for, that makes each listen more like a journey.

You'll travel through scattered emotions, wide experiences and illustrious tales, but while the terrain is always varied, the sun never even thinks to stop burning. Their contrasting musical influences may tug away at each other, gently, but the end result is consistently inspired, showing just how focused they are together.

And therein lies the secret behind their alluring stage manner. Everything seems almost too easy; with each breath, note and beat tripping from their instruments, coincidentally merging into each others' grip as if they were always destined to be together.

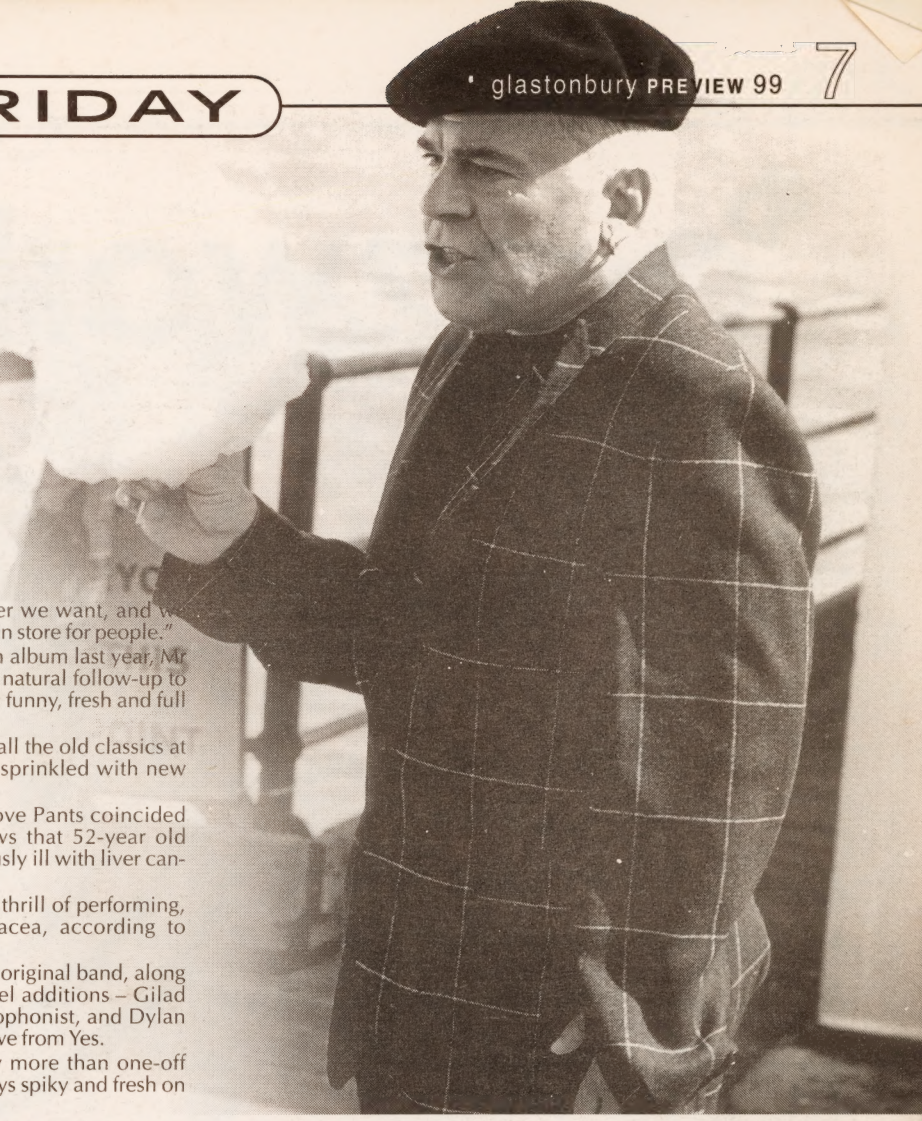
Their real weapon though lies in their front-line vocal tour-de-force. Three strong frontmen equally awash with aural charisma exchange verses and harmonies, making each tune's discourse writhe with a dynamic identity.

They are spearheaded by the 2,000 horsepower tonsils of Ben Ottewell. Like the vocal chords of a bad tempered, chain-smoking, blues-singing rottweiler steeped in vintage whiskey and left out to dry, he owns a voice which may seem out of place in a man so young, but that lifts each song to unexpected new plains of enjoyment. Live it seems more untrue.

Gomez tour dates have so far been intermittent and teasing. For such a fine musical gift to be held back seems somewhat harsh, but warns us not to take them for granted. Just don't miss your perfect opportunity to witness them in their element.

James Berry

Ian Dury and the Blockheads



IAN Dury and the Blockheads. Je T'Adore Ich Liebe Dich.

Anyone over 30 with a pulse knows that the Blockheads' New Boots and Panties is one of the greatest albums of the century.

Quirky, catchy and as English as bangers and mash, the album is stuffed with unforgettable songs like Billericay Dicky, Clevor Trevor and Sweet Gene Vincent.

And the band's finest moment, Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick, vies with Pink Floyd's Another Brick in the Wall as THE anthem of the Seventies.

Dury, an Essex man through and through, met most of the original band in the pubs of the London gig circuit, where they slowly but surely made a name for themselves.

Blokish, cheery and hummable, their songs made a refreshing change to the twin extremes of prog rock and punk.

At the peak of their success, they were as popular as Madness or The Specials, notching up chart hits as easily as you could slip down jellied eels.

But the Blockheads called it a day in 1980, reforming every other blue moon to play Christmas gigs and one-off shows.

And it has now been nearly 20 years since Ian Dury's cockney vowels last bounced off the hills around Glastonbury, back in 1980.

It was a rainy weekend, surprise surprise.

"I remember it being very, very muddy, and I was wearing a white suit, a spotless white suit – but it didn't stay that way very long," recalls keyboard player Mickey Gallagher.

"I hate festivals," he adds. You what?

"We're not festival people, we don't like going to music festivals – I get claustrophobic with that great sea of people around."

The band are playing early and plan to return to London by tea-time, Mickey says.

But while Ian, Mickey and the lads may hate the sea of muddy people that is Glastonbury, they are bound to give a thrilling performance.

Their most recent gigs were in front of audiences of around 2,000 fans a throw, and they are looking forward to the sheer scale of the festival.

"We will be doing it for no reason other than we really enjoy playing live," says Mickey.

And any whippersnappers who have never heard Ian Dury play before could be in for a pleasant surprise, he adds: "We've got a carte blanche to do whatever we want, and w[illegible] may have a few shocks in store for people."

The band released an album last year, Mr Love Pants, seen as the natural follow-up to New Boots and Panties; funny, fresh and full of tunes.

Fans are guaranteed all the old classics at the festival – liberally sprinkled with new songs, of course.

The release of Mr Love Pants coincided with the breaking news that 52-year old Dury was, and is, seriously ill with liver cancer.

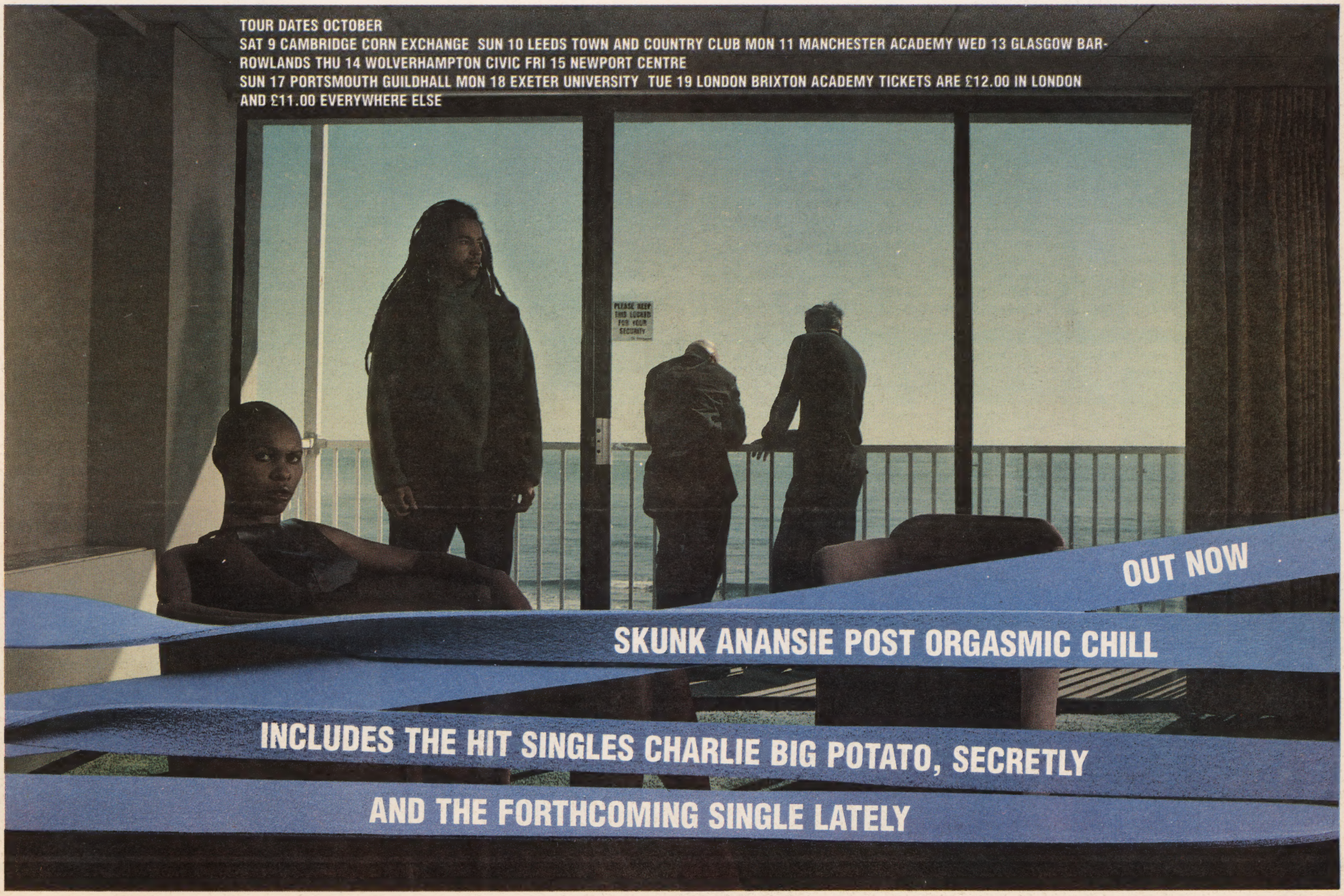
But he still loves the thrill of performing, treating it like a panacea, according to Mickey.

He's kept most of his original band, along with a a couple of novel additions – Gilad Atzmon, an Israeli saxophonist, and Dylan Howe, son of Steve Howe from Yes.

Their refusal to play more than one-off gigs should keep the boys spiky and fresh on their feet.

Jim Pickard

TOUR DATES OCTOBER
SAT 9 CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE SUN 10 LEEDS TOWN AND COUNTRY CLUB MON 11 MANCHESTER ACADEMY WED 13 GLASGOW BARROWLANDS THU 14 WOLVERHAMPTON CIVIC FRI 15 NEWPORT CENTRE
SUN 17 PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL MON 18 EXETER UNIVERSITY TUE 19 LONDON BRIXTON ACADEMY TICKETS ARE £12.00 IN LONDON AND £11.00 EVERYWHERE ELSE



OUT NOW
SKUNK ANANSIE POST ORGASMIC CHILL
INCLUDES THE HIT SINGLES CHARLIE BIG POTATO, SECRETLY
AND THE FORTHCOMING SINGLE LATELY

jazzworld

The name of the Jazzworld Stage doesn't do it any favours. It sounds like a magnet for those in search of cocktail lounge plinky-plonk piano or tribal wailing.

IN reality, it's where Michael Eavis sticks the bands which are so original they can't be pigeon-holed under any other title.

Reggae beats, jungle grooves and irresistible rhythms will be sending pulses racing under the tarpaulin.

The original funk of The Egg, the inventive tunes of "Why must I always be a failure" Skinny and the mad beats of Afro-Celt Sound System.

They are a million miles away from Dave Brubeck or Youssou N'Dour.

Ska pioneers Jazz Jamaica, for instance, are as similar to trad jazz as Garfield is to a real cat.

The Dance Tent has pulled in big beat and house legends alongside some mean hip-hop acts, but the best dancing of the weekend could be at the Jazzworld.

Afro-Celt Sound System, Freestylers, Faithless and Urban Species are not what you would call coffee table music.

On the HMV CD racks they are listed under neither jazz nor world but dance. And this weekend they will produce an aural kaleidoscope of unusual sounds.

The biggest crowd draw of the JazzWorld is likely to be platinum-selling **FAITHLESS**, a band easily big enough to have hogged the Pyramid stage. The British band founded by dance legends Sister Bliss and Rollo became a household name a few years back with its unusual blend of hard-hitting house and sensitive love songs.

Insomnia, Reverence and Salva Mea were both huge hits off the mega-successful album Reverence, which was followed up by Sunday 8pm.

The latest single off that album, Bring My Family Back, was on the Sandra Bullock Hollywood hit film Forces of Nature. Things don't get much starrier than that.

And Faithless, more of a visual treat than the vast majority of its dance rivals, will be at large at most of this year's major festivals, from V99 to Roskilde in Denmark.

SKINNY are without a doubt one of the most exciting new bands around. To describe their incredible range – from drum 'n' bass to chilled out guitar samples to soft funk – would be like trying to paint a sound-wave. Impossible.

Their recent album The Weekend was the most innovative since the Primals' Screamadelica, breaking musical boundaries left, right and centre. This two-piece is inventive, versatile and reached their creative peak on the frankly astounding song Failure.

LAMB is the curious pairing of drum 'n' bass boffin Andy Barlow and singer Lou Rhodes which has won a loyal following of devotees from both sides of the indie/dance divide.

Lou's intense, spooky voice brings a sense of soul to the machine-driven music to create a bewitching live experience.

LOS AMIGOS INVISIBLES are the Venezuelans who put the fun into funky with their easy-going Latino-stylee music.

Signed to the record label of former Talking Heads frontman David Byrne, the Amigos met while students, holding giant parties in seedy Venuzuelan discos.

"The important thing is that people listen to our noise, enjoy it and dance. You don't have to understand Spanish to do that," points out band member Julio.

JAZZ JAMAICA are red-hot champions of the much-neglected ska music which most people only know in its mongrel form through the likes of Madness or The Specials.

The smouldering nine-piece band throw ska, reggae and jazz into one big melting pot, cranking up old jazz classics with bright rhythms and pumping horn arrangements.

The musicians' impeccable credentials include (between the nine of them) work with the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Paul Simon, Soul II Soul, Blur, Jamiroquai and the Brand New Heavies.

Band leader double-bass player Gary Crosby spent the Eighties in big band Jazz Warriors where he played with legendary saxophonist **COURTNEY PINE**, also performing the Jazzworld stage this weekend.

Credited with invention of so-called hip-pop, **URBAN SPECIES** is now a one-man band. Formerly a duo, and now down to singer-musician Mintos, the band makes groovy, grown-up acid jazz with knobs on.

KAREN RAMIREZ, a dreadlocked soul songstress, has tossed together an unusual musical salad of soul, Latino and jazz.

You've heard her before on club anthem Looking for Love but there's much, much more to her than that.

Reggae lovers are in for a treat at the festival, with big-hitters including **BURNING SPEAR.**

This group were among the handful of reggae names to hit the world stage after Bob Marley seared a blazing trail through the 1970s.

Signed up by Island Records along with Gregory Isaacs, their mix of dub and reggae has won them fans worldwide.

ERNEST RANGLIN, now 67 years old, played on My Boy Lollipop with Millie Small, a seven million-selling blockbuster smash.

Hailing from Jamaica, he has been credited with bringing ska to widespread appeal, and is a legend in his field.

JUNIOR DELGADO is another star of the reggae world, and his deep voice and tough grooves on albums such as Bushmaster Revolution are popular in his native Jamaica.

The legendary **EDDIE PALMIERI** is a Latin-style pianist who has been big in the jazz world since the distant Sixties.

The great man doesn't just tickle the ivories, he beats the living daylights out of them, punishing his piano as if it's a percussion instrument.

RAE & CHRISTIAN are the hip-hop trailblazers from Manchester, mixing decks and guitars and backed by a band of sax, flute, singer and scratch DJ.

Check out **FREESTYLERS** for a bit of old-skool rave, **THE EGG** for unusual New Millennium funk and The Herbaliser for cool tunes and "we're so cool" drug references a-plenty.

Jim Pickard

the-raft.com essential sounds first

acoustic stage

Ah, the acoustic stage! What would we do without it? Well, get wet, for a start.

THIS ever-more voluminous construction (to call it a tent would be to demean it) provides sanctuary from the elements and a permanent guarantee of some fantastic music.

Predicting exactly what will happen is always a challenge (especially as the bill is changing right up to the last minute), but normally there's a magic moment of some kind. Last year it was delivered by Bernard Butler, who overcame a power failure by descending into the crowd and performing a genuinely acoustic set in a pin-dropping atmosphere. This trouper-like behaviour didn't merit poor old Bernard subsequently having his guitar pinched from the back of his van on the way back to the Other Stage.

The power of a song to whirl along an audience will doubtless be in evidence. Do you remember how, last year, Catatonia had thousands of bedraggled ragamuffins all thanking the Lord for being Welsh, regardless of whether they were? In 1999, it's bound to be Tom Robinson who will have us all declaring how Glad we are to be Gay, regardless of whether we are. Don't expect pure nostalgia from Tom, however, who has continued to make a series of super records for Cooking Vinyl. Tom's next album will be a live set recorded in Flanders and he comes to Glastonbury fresh from a series of shows with Suzanne Vega. He has the magic knack of communication which works so well on the Acoustic Stage.

There's a fascinating collection of headliners. Lonnie Donegan was a seminal influence on a generation of guitar-rockers, inspired by the DIY possibilities of his skiffle format to try for themselves. He disapproved, however, of many of his long-haired star-fans and has since then been noted for his musical conservatism. Will such a man be able to fit in at Glastonbury? We may be surprised. After all, who could have anticipated that Rolf Harris would tearfully declare after his Acoustic Stage performance that it was the best day of his life? Donegan will probably be concentrating on material from his comeback album Muleskinner Blues.

And Stackridge? Stackridge? It's wholly appropriate that these cheerfully melodic West Country veterans should celebrate their reunion at Glastonbury, but without Mutter Slater? Without Andy Davis? This means that we are unlikely to be invited to do the Stanley, since this is really more of a Korgis reunion.

Stackridge have been busy writing and recording a brand new album entitled Something For The Weekend, eager to prove that there really is absolutely nothing that can't be revived. The big question, though, is will they play Purple Spaceships Over Yatton? Now that really would be a Glastonbury Moment.

There is the traditional selection of "people who used to be famous in bands", including this year Henry McCullough (from the Grease Band and Wings) and Mark Nevin (Fairground Attraction). Representing Squeeze, we have Glenn Tilbrook, who will undoubtedly bring down the canvas with a mass singalong. Squeeze songs work well in an acoustic environment, but let's hope Glenn doesn't indulge in his habit of asking for requests and then ignoring them.

Not to be forgotten, either, is the "famous offspring of famous artists" syndrome. In this case, Roy Harper has wowed festival crowds for decades, now son Nick, already a veteran of the Arts Centre scene, has a go. Nick's new album "Instrumental" is, ahem, mainly instrumental, but with myriad influences from jungle to indie-rock.

There's a stellar line up of top acoustic artists from Ireland, for whom this will be an ideal environment. Guitar and bouzouki player Donal Lunny is a graduate of both Planxty and Moving Hearts, while Sharon Shannon and Mary Coughlan both nowadays have a worldwide following. Other female soloists who should create a warm atmosphere no matter what the weather does are Liz Horsman and the evergreen Christine Collister.

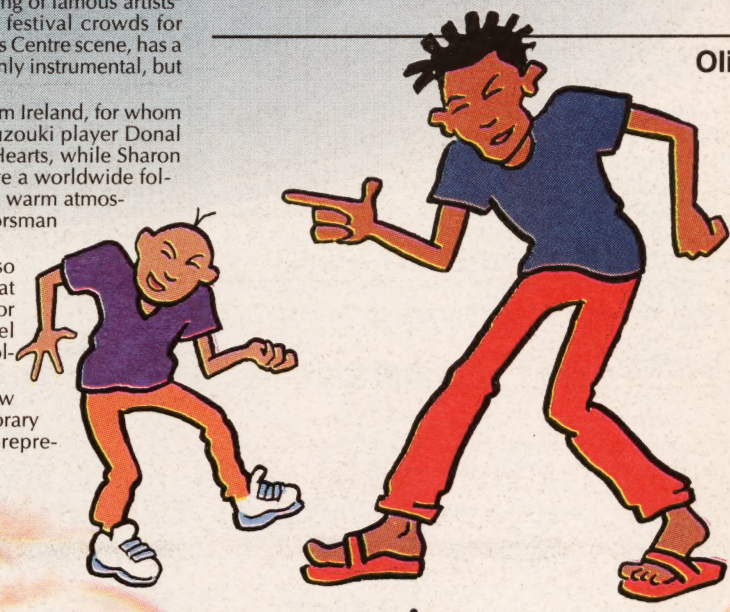
Blues is ignored this year (I guess there are so many blues festivals around nowadays that Glastonbury feels the music is adequately catered for elsewhere). Still, the London Community Gospel choir will be quite a spectacle and a hard act to follow too.

The ever-burgeoning phenomenon of 'New Country' is arguably the most interesting contemporary musical movement. You'd expect it to be well-represented on the Acoustic Stage, but what has happened is that the bands like Mercury Rev and Deus who have really picked up the baton and run with it, are more rock orientated and are therefore to be found on the Other Stage. Look out, though, for two of the more interesting acoustic acts this year: Grand Drive, whose "country Memphis soul" surprisingly comes from Aboriginal brothers Julian and Danny Wilson, who operate out of London; and the enticing prospect of Los Pistoleros, a Tampa, Florida act who blend mainstream rock with the airy voices of their Hispanic culture.

Once again, the bookers of the Acoustic Stage have succeeded in constructing a boldly eclectic bill which cheerfully ignores the 'finger in the ear' brigade and issues a challenge to the musically blinkered.

Tips for top moments? Well, Suzanne Vega will pull a massive crowd, but for me and many others, still besotted with Marianne after all these years, she's the one who will bring a tear to the eye.

Oliver Gray



Marianne Faithfull

IT can't rain this year. Why? Because the mere thought of the summation of elegance that is Marianne Faithfull having to don wellies and trudge through mud is just too heartbreaking to contemplate.

Marianne is one of British rock's few remaining true legends, and to have captured her for the Acoustic Stage is a major coup. The story of her troubled journey through life is a well-known one; shy convent schoolgirl, frail songstress of As Tears Go By, celebrated pop star liaisons and scandals, drug addiction, homelessness and eventual artistic triumph with Broken English in 1979. She has survived a tormented career yet emerged with grace and dignity.

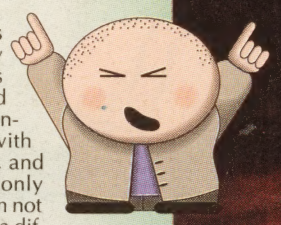
For Marianne's appearance we can thank the fact that this month sees the release of her first 'pop' album in four years. Entitled Vagabond Ways, it was recorded in California and features songs written by Elton John and Bernie Taupin and with Daniel Lanois, as well as duets with Emmylou Harris and Roger Waters.

Today, Marianne is better known for her Seven Deadly Sins song cycle performances, but her choice of material for this rare appearance is anyone's guess. All we can be sure of is that it will be magical.

Oliver Gray

AS a culturally-stunted American, I've listened to countless friends talk about the differences between the rave scene here in the States and the one in England. You see, although there's an emerging "above ground" in America, there's still a tight little underground. We still revel in parties of only 100 people where the DJs hang out and chill with the dancers before and after their sets, where the organizers of the party pass out vegan ice-cream sandwiches and free fruit. I've had well-intentioned Brits explain that they hope I'm not expecting the same kind of underground lovey fests, because it's just not like that in Old England. They warn that it's just a lot of clubs and dilated pupils, no vibe. Quite honestly, I don't believe them. Call me naïve, but I anticipate if there's underground electronic-music loving freaks and oddfolks to be found, I'll find 'em at Glastonbury.

I can't really afford to go to England this summer. I'm a writer and an editor for a U.S. rave magazine, and anyone who knows the American underground music media can tell you that there's not much money to be made. But there's no way I would consider missing the infamous Glastonbury festival. After years of hearing about all the fun that everyone else had, I just couldn't live with myself if another June passed and I hadn't had the chance to go. I want to be buried in mud, rained on in the dance tent by human feces, surrounded by deliciously bizarre people, and maybe (hopefully) catch some of the world's best electronic music performers along the way.



I must admit though that it's really not the musicians who are seducing me to sell my clothes just for a few weeks overseas. I've found that the action on stage is usually not worth watching. Sweaty techno boys and their amazing rave machines are not nearly as entertaining as the true spectacle of the crowd! My work with Lotus Magazine has dragged me all across the U.S., and watching people dance has become an obsession (only when I'm too tired to shake a tail myself, naturally). I'm not the first to have found that every region in the U.S. has a different style. Kiddies in San Francisco use their housey spastic kickstep. Folks in Chicago magically slide their way around with floor without moving their feet (really, it must be seen to be believed). The East Coasters play with their invisible rave ball, always wearing something very name-brand and stylish. In Los Angeles they all stack up in front of the speakers, writhing and groping and vibrating in their overalls made out of kiddy sheets. And in Seattle? It's this strange give-me-my-space blissed out groovy stoned thing. Somebody once called it hippy hop.

If American dancers can vary so much from region to region, I can only imagine how us culturally-deprived yanks would compare to the international flavor of Europe! I'm sure I'll spend more than a few hours at Glastonbury completely enchanted by the wacky Euro-dancers. My British friend here in Seattle is a big fan of incessantly hopping up and down, and after watching him defy gravity at various stateside parties, I'm prepared for anything. Surely, not everyone in Europe dances like they've got a pogo stick up their bums (I think that's British for "butt").

Really though, what I'm the most excited about is the whole survival thing. Yes, there's the music, and yes, there's the people. But all those people have to relieve themselves somewhere, and I've heard stories of scaries hiding in what one friend called "the poo pits", waiting to peek at the bottoms of unsuspecting people seeking to relieve themselves. Imagine! I'm quite excited about it myself, and trust me, I'll be peering between my legs the whole time I'm taking care of business. Hello, down there, I'll shout ... are you enjoying the view? If you see me, be sure to wave, won't you?

So, here I am in Seattle, trying in vain to save money so that I can eat at Glastonbury, and all I can think about is WHO NEEDS FOOD WHEN YOU'VE GOT THAT MUCH MUSIC? I'm thinking of developing a cow-like ability to eat grass, although from the sounds of it, I might be smarter to learn how to eat mud. I might finally master the art of photosynthesis and be a pretty dancing flower, which would be grand – although again, from the sounds of it Glastonbury hasn't seen much sun these past couple of years. Maybe I'll just be very very hungry. I have trouble thinking that my stomach will be hungry when my mind and eyes will be so full.

Ariel Meadow Stallings

Ariel Meadow Stallings grew up in a school bus in the woods on an island in Washington State. She now lives in Seattle and is a freelance writer and editor of Lotus Magazine, America's favourite free underground spiritual rave-rag. Rumor has it that the magazine has been spotted in England. To confirm the rumors or for more information, please see ***http://www.lotusmag.com*** *or email* ***ariel@lotusmag.com***

It's hard to believe dance music was once shunned at Glastonbury, as it's everywhere now, and the Dance Tent has quickly grown into a vital part of the Festival experience.

Malcolm Haynes of Bristol-based Good Groove has once again programmed the event, and he's promising some changes this time. The tent is the same size, which means it'll hold around 9,000, but things will look very different.

He explains: "We're going for a different feel inside, instead of making it dark, and like a typical club environment, it will be an all-day environment. After all, we only get a couple of hours when it's dark before we shut down.

"So we've got Temple Decor from Reading to custom decorate it with drapes, like some huge Arabian temple, and hang big pendants, 15 foot in diameter, both vertical and horizontal, which spin. It looks fabulous in the daytime, mindblowing, and at night even more so because of UV lighting..."

So the Dance Tent should look and sound special this time round, on its fourth appearance. Malcolm says Friday

dance special

So far so good then, but if all that isn't enough for you lucky, lucky people, Sunday is the day that has really got everyone buzzing, as Hip Hip Phenomenon 99 is set to become legendary.

Two decades on from Grandmaster Flash and the Sugarhill Gang, and hip hop has finally conquered the planet. The universe is next, but first there's Glastonbury...

"It should fantastic, as we've managed to get together a line-up that will probably never be seen again," Malcolm says, justifiably proud.

Old skool, nu skool, and everything in between, he rightly boasts that he's bagged "some of the biggest names in their field" for this particular Somerset field.

DJ Cash Money will be in the area, along with some of the brightest new stars, like Scratch Perverts and the mighty Jurassic 5. Then there's Dr Dooom (cor) the latest project from the infamous Kool Keith, following his Dr Octagon incarnation.

Malcolm also tips the Latin hip hop of Ozomatli, who he rates as "fantastic — Carlos Santana described them as the future of music". Like the other acts here, they are also guaranteed to put on a hell of a show.

And none more so than headliners Roots, live and direct from Philadelphia, with the emphasis on live. "They're about to hit really big — their third album got really silly, and they're about the biggest underground hip hop band with real street credibility. And they do it all pretty much live."

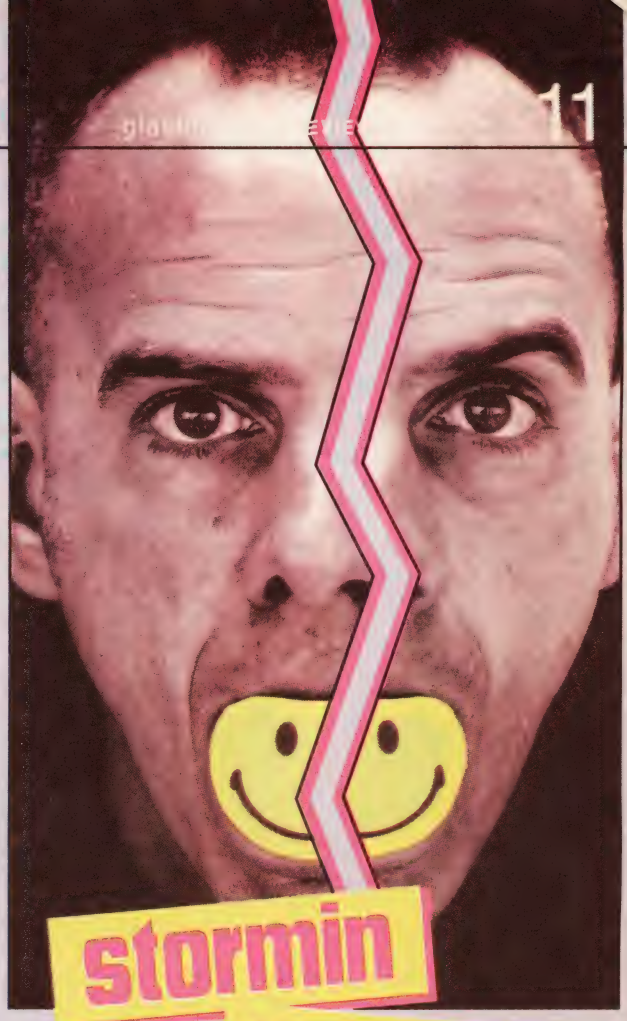
So from the DJs working four decks through to bands, and with breakdancers on stage and video link-ups to for a close-up view of the turntable tricks, it's all there, decks and effects all day. And Glastonbury's own Grandmaster, Michael Eavis, is right behind it, declaring it should be amazing, and one of the Festival highlights.

features some of the new techno and house names to warm things up before a final three hours that will surely be rammed.

"We've got the Chemical Brothers doing a DJ set and Fatboy Slim, which is a repeat from last year. The audience loved their sets, and they both asked to come back.

"Saturday is a bit big beat, before getting a bit drum'n'bass with DJ Krust, the new Breakbeat Era project live, and Fabio & Grooverider. Then we've got Praga Khan, a live techno band from Belgium making their first appearance at Glastonbury, who should be good, and then of course we finish up with Carl Cox, the Godfather of Techno."

Matthew George



stormin norman

CAST your mind back a few years. You are watching TOTP and on come those gangly northerners called the Housemartins, and start wailing away.

In the corner of the picture a rangy bassist, one Norman Cook, pops in and out of view. The music isn't up to much and you don't give it a second thought. As for someone called Zoe Ball, well, never heard of her mate.

Fast-forward to 1999 and flick on the radio, or take a trip to a club and on come those first great piano chords from Praise You.

It is somehow different to most of the other piffle around. But can this really be the same lanky fellah who plucked the thick strings with those dodgy herberts from Hull? One and the same.

But if you think all that is bizarre, try and get your head around this. Fatboy Slim – nickname the Brighton Butcher – is one of the top acts at this year's Glastonbury Festival.

Fatboy is the couturier at the Big Beat Boutique, the maker of such impossibly inch-perfect records as You've Come A Long Way Baby and Better Living Through Chemistry.

Stormin' Norman has been one of dance music's usual suspects for quite a while now.

This is the man who has produced a pile of hits under various aliases in various genres – Beats International (Dub Be Good to Me), Freakpower, Might Dub Kats and Pizzaman – over the last ten years.

Before his present incarnation he had already amassed two, almost three Number One singles and a career which would make a lesser icon proud.

Few can be said to have created a whole new genre of music, as Fatboy Slim did in the creation of Big Beat, the Frankenstein creation of techno, hip-hop and whatever else came to hand.

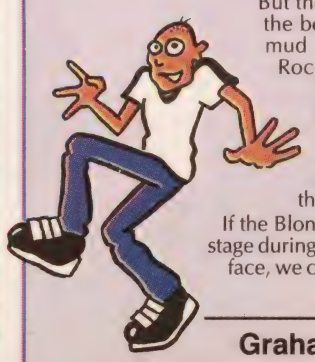
As much as the electric guitar transformed the music of the Fifties, Mr Slim's digital technology is producing totally new sounds.

He is the man of the moment. On top of his string of hit singles he has done some storming remixes for everyone from Cornershop to the Beastie Boys.

And earlier this year he appeared on stage with the dance legend Armand van Helden in a DJ duel to commemorate the third birthday of the Big Beat Boutique.

You might think Mr Slim is slightly too leftfield for a do like Glastonbury, a festival dominated usually by that guitar-handed mob. Not a DJ with nothing more than decks, beats and far too much talent.

Well, there you would be wrong, you see. Because this little outing is about the most kicking sounds around, whatever they are. That's why Fatboy is perfect.



But then again, who needs an excuse? Get the boy on so we can slither about in the mud or frolic around in the sun to the Rockerfeller Skank, which was, incidentally, voted best dance record of 1998 by NME.

Oh. and if our Norm's wife-to-be Zoe Ball should just happen to be presenting the BBC coverage, so what if that is a convenient coincidence?

If the Blonde Elfin One should saunter on to the stage during Praise You, and put a smile on Norm's face, we could be forgiven for going 'Ahhhh'.

Graham Keeley and Ben Evans

FRIDAY

The Beautiful South

COME on, own up – someone out there really likes The Beautiful South. It could be the girl stood next to you. It could be that middle-aged couple cuddled together on their picnic blanket. It could be those lads clustered round the beer tent. It could even be you. Whoever it is, they've got over two million kindred and equally shadowy spirits on this sceptered isle who also bought 'Carry On Up The Charts: The Best of the Beautiful South'. And I haven't even mentioned Simon Mayo.

Over two million copies, you say? The third fastest-selling UK album ever, you say? Hmm, it's always the quiet ones you've got to watch, isn't it? And bands don't come much quieter then The Beautiful South. Quickly acquiring, and persistently dogged by, a Radio 2 pipe 'n' slippers reputation, they seem in no hurry to chuck televisions out of hotel windows and smuggle cocaine through customs in order to resurrect some sort of rock-and-roll tabloid reputation. Instead, they'd rather hunker down in Hull in their local pub (The Mainbrace, fact fans) and the closest they ever come to the showbiz sherbet is guitarist David Rotheray's bizarre habit of taping plastic bags of flour underneath tables when visiting airports in order to test their security. Well, it made me laugh.

The Beautiful South have been phenomenally successful almost in spite of themselves. In the face of their reluctance to enthusiastically play the industry game, they have invisibly managed to attract the kind of loyal following that most bands would sell their souls for. There can't be many sufficiently relaxed musicians around who would cheerfully dismiss their entire recorded history with one self-deprecating comment, as Paul Heaton once did memorably. Beautiful South songs? "They're all shit", apparently.

Fans of (among others) Don't Marry Her, Rotterdam, Song For Whoever", You Keep It All In and of course A Little Time would vehemently disagree. You know these songs as well as they do – you can't help it. Even without them being rammed down our throats in the usual style of the next Next Big Thing, The Beautiful South regularly have a habit of sneaking up on our national radio-consciousness and whacking it on the noggin with a sockful of wet sand. There's no guarantee of success with each release (indeed, some of the singles from their 'Best Of' failed to trouble the charts in any significant way) but often enough they buff up a diamond that can't help but attract bedazzled disciples.

Be it their cover of Everybody's Talking, simply chosen to ease newbie vocalist Jacqueline Abbott into the scheme of things, or the drunken drink-driven tale of alcoholics in Old Red Eyes Is Back, The Beautiful South take and retain a common sense approach to their music. It isn't going to change the world, it can't cure cancer and it probably won't make them more attractive to the opposite sex. It won't even buy them a drink at the bar. What it will do is chronicle the obsessions and preoccupations of England and the English with almost uncomfortable accuracy.

To make the bitter pill that bit easier to swallow, these acidic lyrical observations usually come couched in an acoustic or mildly electric form, shipping the iron fist in a velvet glove. As Rotheray has noted: "There's an assumption that you can't be angry unless you've got 20 kilowatts of arse ballet behind you."

This is the essence of The Beautiful South – they're just regular people, albeit with some irregular talents. Paul Heaton has always had one of the best voices and sharpest lyrical tongues around, right from his start with The Housemartins. When they split up and Heaton re-emerged with The Beautiful South, people were taken aback at the smoother, more soulful sound. But what else would you expect from a man who owns 26 Al Green albums and 23 Isley Brothers LPs?

They've been called "Britain's biggest and best pub band", a description that could almost have come from the band themselves. They'll never be Britain's biggest and best club or wine bar band – pubs, and the way of life they encompass, are the spiritual home of this very (Northern) English band. In a world where style repeatedly triumphs over content, where the critical cognoscenti barely bother to scratch the surface of new product, The Beautiful South remain unique in their pursuit of the ordinary. Which is why millions of ordinary people, folk like you and me in fact, buy their untrumpeted records, go to their unsponsored gigs and roundly celebrate their cataloguing of cruel Britannia. It's done with musical style; it's done with caustic honesty and best of all it's done with subtle humour. How refreshing.

Jonathan Wilson

BLONDIE

IT is hard to believe that Blondie have been around for 25 years.

The New York band appeared on the scene while most of Gomez, for instance, were just twinkles in their mothers' eyes.

But Blondie won't just be trading on past successes when they play the Pyramid Stage on Friday. Their most recent album, released in February, spawned one of the biggest surprise chart-toppers in pop history, Maria.

Not since Lazarus sat upright and blinked had there been such an unlikely comeback.

The story started in 1973, when Angel & The Snakes was founded. The group soon changed its title to Blondie. The name was apt, for the group would always be perceived as "Debbie Harry and the other four blokes".

The voluptuous bleach-blonde Harry was the lynchpin of the band and the sex symbol. Blondie without the blonde would have been like a Bond film without Bond.

Many female singers are beautiful. Some are talented. But Harry was one of the few who was both, and on some songs – such as Call Me or Heart of Glass – she sounded sublime, thrilling and utterly feminine.

Heart of Glass, from the classic album Parallel Lines, was a number one on both sides of the Pond, and Call Me, which featured in the movie American Gigolo, was also a monster hit.

Blondie were swept along on the 1970s tide of New Wave, although what they had in common with punk bands like The Damned or The Sex Pistols is still a mystery.

If anything, they were more akin to disco, though minus the velvet posturing and glitterball naffness.

Debbie's voice, soaring over a throbbing beat and jerky keyboard, was closer to Donna Summer than anyone else.

And songs such as Denis and (I'm Always Touched by Your) Presence Dear were proof of the band's quirky humour.

The group split in 1984. Debbie, now called Deborah Harry, achieved solo success with plod-rock hit French Kissing In The USA, which sounded horribly similar to Bruce Springsteen.

After that Deborah and the boys kept a fairly low profile, until they teamed up last year to knock out a raft of spanking-new songs.

They should be well worth a look. A case, if you like, of absence making the heart of glass grow fonder.

Jim Pickard

MORE glittery than Gary Glitter. More verve than The Verve. And camper than a thousand mincing sailors with cucumbers stuffed down their leggings.

They aren't the original article, but frankly, my precious, I don't give a flying duck.

Abba copycats Bjorn Again, to all intents and purposes, are the Scandinavian popsters adored – though not exactly respected – by funsters the world over.

Abba were once upon a time the definitive pop band; melodic, funky and unashamedly sentimental. And, most importantly, worshippers at the altar of Fun with a capital F. Wearing Abba on your shirtsleeve was utterly naff but it was a bloody good laugh. And that, surely, is what a live experience is all about.

Abba may have moved on to greener pastures but Bjorn Again still carry the torch with the blessing of Benny and Agnetha and co. As Bjorn himself said: "It was always my belief than anyone who looks like me deserves to have a successful career."

Formed ten years ago in Australia, of all places, Bjorn Again have since wowed 1,500 audiences in 40 countries, and have become the biggest cover band in the world, with some very unlikely fans. In 1992, Nirvana refused to play the Reading festival unless Bjorn Again appeared – and in one of the last Nirvana interviews (on MTV) Dave Grohl was filmed wearing a Bjorn Again T-shirt. The band has even clinched its own recording deal, producing live albums of its best gigs.

If you close your eyes while they play you can hear sound-perfect Abba songs and spot-on "Swedish" banter between the band members. Open your eyes, and it's still not obvious that they aren't the real McCoy. Sequinned white costumes, ridiculous 70s hair, and all the original moves. Surely these aren't the imposters from Down Under?

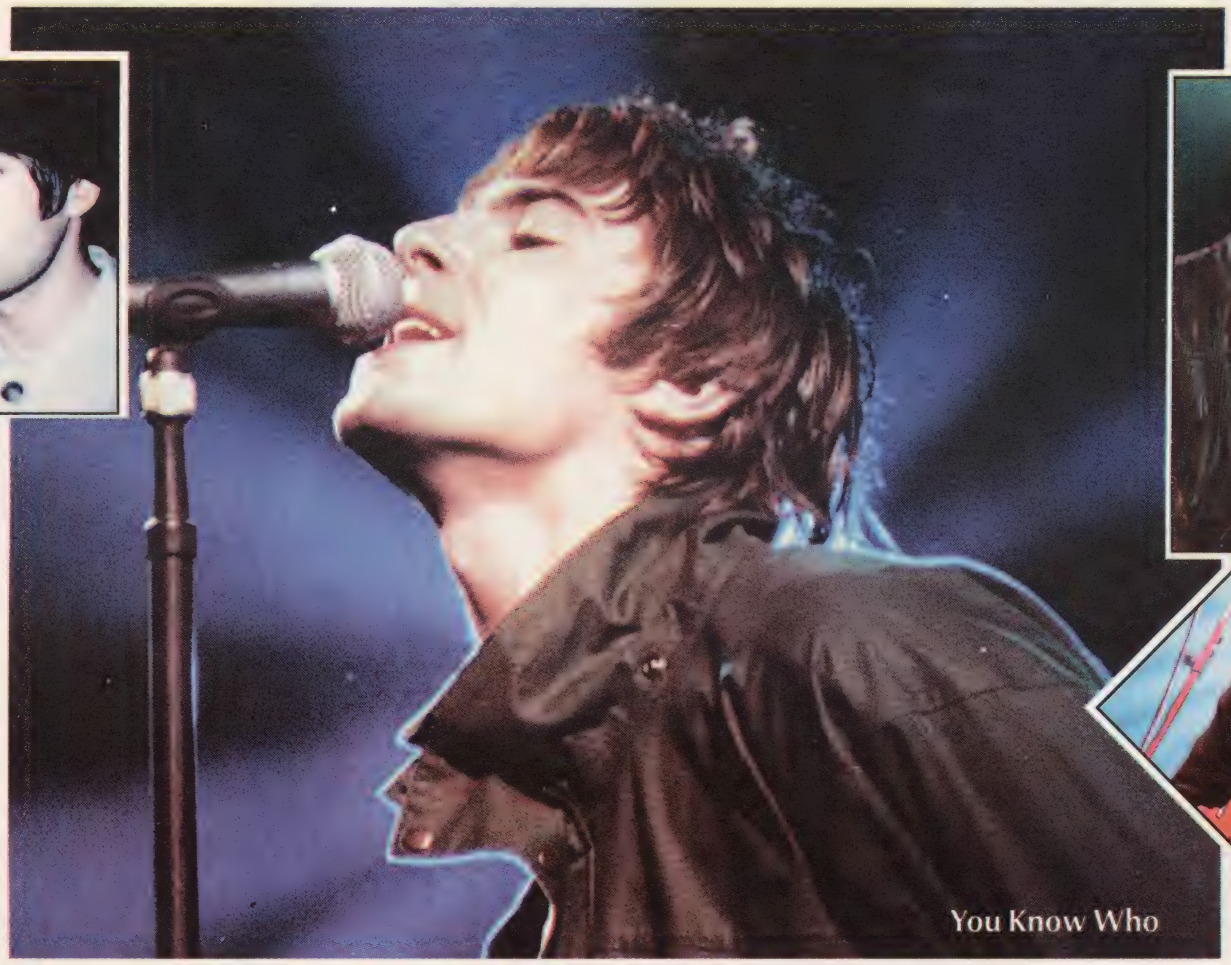
So, boys and girls, pull on your stilettos and fishnets, slap on some lurid eye shadow and come park your wiggling backsides in front of Bjorn Again. If you like pompous guitar rock or fiddly dance music this won't be your cup of tea. But anyone in search of bright, brash and brilliant tunes will love this lot.

JP

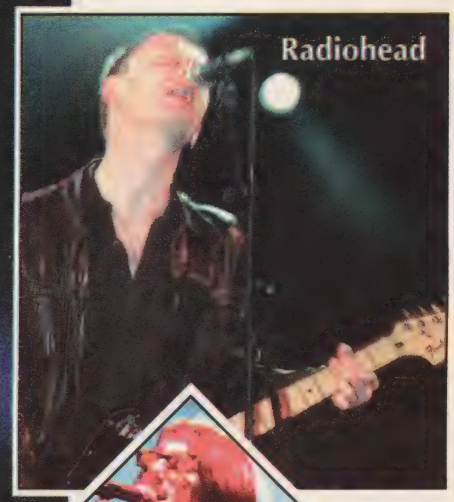
NEW BANDS

6-PAGE SPECIAL

Where the stars are born



You Know Who



Radiohead

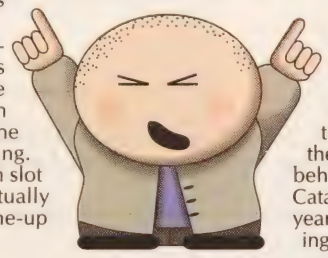
Embrace

JUST last year the Glastonbury Festival sprouted a new tent called, appropriately enough, the New Tent. You might have thought that Glastonbury was already pretty well-stocked with tented entertainment. But music is ever-evolving and it became apparent to the Festival organisers that there was always an intriguing selection of sounds and bands bubbling just below the surface of the main stages that demanded a voice.

The solution was a tent of a reasonable size that could provide an intimate atmosphere and an encouraging platform for the emerging stars of tomorrow, as well as a 'low-key' stage from which more established names could launch solo careers or new projects. This is the New Tent, currently bedding down for its second year, over near the Jazz World stage. And it's well worth a look, for a number of reasons.

The nature of the music business means that sometimes reputations are made overnight and sometimes it takes a few years. This, coupled with the unparalleled scope of the Glastonbury Festival, means that there are always a handful of unpolished diamonds lurking low down in the line-up, waiting for their moment of discovery. In a year or two's time, you might well be kicking yourself for missing the opportunity to see them first, to get in on the ground floor. No doubt the people who saw Oasis on the Other Stage in 1994, at 2.30pm on the Sunday afternoon, felt pretty pleased with themselves over the following year as the band kickstarted the Britpop era and took over the world. Within the year, Oasis were back at Glastonbury, only this time they were headlining the Pyramid stage.

The Glastonbury Festival has a history of such successes and now with the New Tent it offers the bands and the audience a chance to get acquainted that little bit sooner. Dodgy would have been right at home in the New Tent in 1992, when instead they opened the Other Stage on Sunday at 11.20 in the morning. Subsequent years would see them graduate to a 7pm slot on the Pyramid Stage in 1997. This year, they're actually back at the Festival in the New Tent, with a new line-up seeking to emulate previous achievements.



Also in 1992, Ocean Colour Scene were treading the early afternoon boards of the Pyramid Stage, several years before the Riverboat Song and TFI Friday brought them massive acclaim and landed them back on the Pyramid Stage for 1997 – this time, second from top and preceded only by Radiohead.

The story of The Verve at Glastonbury is also one the Festival is proud of, but how many fans can say they saw the 3.30pm show on the Other Stage (or the NME Stage, as it was then) in 1993? For that matter, how many people can claim to have been there for the 1995 Sunday slot, same time, same place? Believe it or not, even Menswear were higher on the bill than The Verve that year! And yet within three years, V98 would pay The Verve a cool one million pounds to play just two shows. Richard Ashcroft always believed they'd be huge and he was right – but how many people now wish they could have seen them back then, at a time when they were still little more than a best-kept musical secret?

The rise of Catatonia and Embrace up the Festival ladder has been even swifter. In 1997, Embrace were there on the Other Stage, starting a shade the morning side of midday. Playing to a handful of valiant muddy souls in this first wet year was an experience a world apart from their 1998 appearance (well, except for the rain). This time they headlined the Other Stage - the good will out, indeed.

JONATHAN WILSON

on how Glastonbury helps brilliance to blossom . . .

Also in 1997, immediately following Embrace's slot, was an appearance by the then largely ignored Catatonia. They had their devoted following, certainly, but were still something of a cult band. Yet within a matter of months, Mulder and Scully and the accompanying International Velvet album catapulted them into rock's Premier League, ensuring that when they returned to the Festival in 1998 they were only just behind Embrace at the top of the bill. I knew who Catatonia were in 1997 and I wish I'd caught their set that year instead of lying in my tent hoping it would stop raining!

However, perhaps even more surprising (given the benefit of hindsight, anyway) is the fact that 1997 was also the year that The Stereophonics opened the day's proceedings on the Other Stage, playing even before Embrace and Catatonia at a mind-boggling 11.20am. This is the same band, of course, who are now one of the biggest bands in the country; the band that played it's own mini-festival at a Welsh castle last year and the band that has just supported Aerosmith at Wembley Stadium – now that's rock and roll! They were also back in 1998, this time on the Pyramid Stage in a late afternoon time slot. And it stopped raining for their set, too, which was nice. Mind you, it started raining again for Mansun, who came on immediately afterwards.

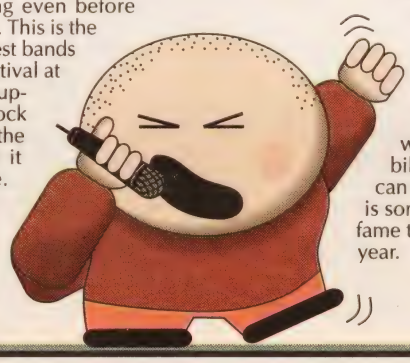
Other notable successes from the class of '97 include Finley Quaye, who appeared on the Jazz World Stage at 1.40pm. Over the course of the following year, his debut album would be released; it would become enormously successful and the 1998 Festival would see Monsieur Quaye comandeering the Pyramid Stage in the early evening.

And while Finley was occupying the Jazz Stage in the early afternoon drizzle of '97, Terrorvision were stomping their rock thing all over the Pyramid Stage. Who could have predicted that in two years' time a song about Mexico's national brew, the insanely-catchy, Zoe-Ball-sponsored drinking anthem Tequila, would propel them to the top of the charts? A real curve ball, that one.

What a difference a year can make. In 1997, you could also have seen a one o'clock show from Bentley Rhythm Ace in the Dance Tent, again a year before their album harnessed the sound of the big beat phenomenon, as well as a midday appearance by Travis, who this year have crept considerably closer to the top of the bill on the Other Stage.

Just rewinding briefly to 1995 and who do we find on the Jazz Stage at an unbelievable 10.45 in the morning? Blimey, it's none other than Ultrasound! I don't think there'll be many die-hard fans of their recently-released debut album who can claim to have enjoyed that early-morning spectacle. At least this year Ultrasound fans can stay in bed for as long as they want – the band are second from top in the New Tent, just behind Patti Smith. Something tells me the reception they'll get this year will surpass their memories of the Jazz Stage in 1995 and it should be a night to remember.

In the same year, fans of Skunk Anansie would have had to have got up pretty early on Saturday in order to catch their midday appearance on the Other Stage. Playing in the light of day to a sleepy crowd and preceding These Animal Men (taxi!) now seems like an unlikely set of circumstances, but at least it was sunny for them. This year, of course, Skunk Anansie are headlining on Sunday night – quite a musical journey in just four years. Let's hope they bring back the sunshine.



The Charlatans are another band whose popularity has mushroomed since their late-afternoon set on the NME Stage in 1995 – if they were to play the Festival now, I would expect them to be right at the top of the bill on the Pyramid Stage. At any given time, you can never tell who will rise and who will fall, but it is some indication of the fickle, fleeting nature of fame that Sleeper were much higher up the bill that year.

(continued on pages 14-15)

NEW BANDS

dark star

IF ever a record told the story of the musicians that made it, Dark Star's "20/20 Sound" is that record. Crawling shellshocked from the collapsed wreckage of celebrated psychedelicists Levitation in 1994, David Francolini, Bic Hayes and Laurence O'Keefe wandered aimlessly, and separately, into apparent oblivion.

The implosion of their musical world left them somewhat bereft and a few years spent languishing in the pit of despair, generously laced with alcohol and acid, duly followed. It wasn't until all three attended a Sonic Youth gig together that they were reminded of what it was they should be doing with their time, namely trawling through their peaks and troughs in order to realise a largely improvised music that soared above it all.

The very next day a rehearsal room was booked and over the following months the Dark Star sound began to slowly struggle free of the emotional tangle. Big of guitar, heavy of bass and tribal of drum, the Dark Star moniker adopted could hardly be more appropriate for the giant sound emerging.

Pulling them all through a period of intense personal and financial strain, their new-found passion soon bred a dramatic improvement in the band's collective fortune – songs took a coherent form; much of the album was recorded and eventually a contract with EMI rose over the horizon. It was the least they deserved.

Already, they've been dragged into the "nu-psychedelia" camp by an over-eager music press looking to create a fresh scene. There is an expansive and experimental feel to the Dark Star sound, but the real roots seem to originate with bands like Swans, PIL and Killing Joke – the sound of the angry eighties rather than the swinging sixties.

The atmosphere is intense; the guitars savagely overdriven and the intention, both musically and lyrically, seems to be to drill down through your cranium and burrow into the depths of your mind. Don't be afraid, though – it's all totally humane.

JW

Gay Dad

GAY DAD are now the biggest Great White Hope since the last ones, whose name I've forgotten.

A Top 10 single, To Earth With Love, is pretty much all they have offered so far.

But they have been given the kind of press coverage you'd expect the Messiah to receive on his Millennium comeback tour.

You could build a starfleet of paper aeroplanes with the many magazine articles written about the band.

Whether the band have justified the plethora of profiles and interviews is a matter of opinion, and the publicity may have something to do with Warhol-haired frontman Cliff Jones, a former music journalist.

The music press have a disconcerting tendency to build up a band or a scene on the basis of very little – before taking delight in smashing it back down to earth. Remember Chesney Hawkes, or Babylon Zoo? They had catchy singles too.

But to dismiss Gay Dad just because they have been so far so successful seems a little grudging.

The army of cynics waiting for the band to fly too close to the sun have failed to take one thing into account.

Gay Dad are very, very good. Not exactly original, but not as derivative as their Prog-Rock label may suggest.

Catchy, rocky, cheerful and lively. In the flesh, not just on record.

And of course, joint contenders with Badly Drawn Boy for "Best Band Name of the 80s" award.

JP

ADD N TO X

SONIC warriors Add N to X take their name from the computer command which creates random electronic noise.

It's a pretty suitable moniker for the British trio, made up of Barry Smith, Ann Shenton and Steve Claydon.

The group's violent, sporadic noise follows the trail blazed by Kraftwerk and other techno-noise pioneers; it's confrontational, uncompromising and intense.

The group was born when Barry found an MS20 synthesiser in a bin in Piccadilly Circus, and its composition methods are equally scatty.

During sessions at a rehearsal studio, the band switched on all their keyboards and played them randomly.

Although this "monkeys with typewriters" approach might sound a little risky, the results over the last three years have so far been exciting.

Barry says: "It's a battle between us and the machines, these perfect machines matched against our human misbehaviour. We think they're extremely intelligent and until we figure out how to work them, they're just sitting there going 'C'mon then'." Hmm.

But whatever you make of the group's wacky ideas, it could be worth checking out their sound, self-described as "Avant-Hard" – also the name of their latest album, released in April.

One music reviewer has said of them: "They manufacture an extremely passable version of Iraqi torture tactic by dint of their hell-bound frequencies and buttock-trembling vibes."

Don't be frightened. Be enlightened.

Jim Pickard

Death in Vegas

AS the name of their band, Dead Elvis was always going to cause problems. Apart from fielding endless criticism from outraged fans of the King, there was also the matter of blue suede shoe-wearing teddy boys rolling up to your gigs expecting a full-on revival of that inimitable Presley magic.

It must have been something of a shock to these ageing rockabillies, therefore, to turn up and have their senses assaulted by a heady mixture of Chemical breakbeats, dub influences and electronic experimentation. No Hound Dog here.

For Heavenly Social DJ Richard Fearless and graphic designer Steve Hellier, the name simply reflected an idle fascination with other people's obsessions. Their first single, the flute-laced dubplate of Opium Shuffle, came out under the Dead Elvis tag, but the duo soon elected to work under the more subtle Death In Vegas moniker.

Either way, their music continued unaffected. Taking a line from Lionrock, who they toured with, a jazzy, mellow feel was blended with Jamaican ska and reggae to create some warm and lazy grooves, while on their debut album (called, of course, Dead Elvis) this frequently give way to a more industrial, techno sound as the pair sought to indulge their varied passions.

The wider vision of Death In Vegas could also give rise to avant-garde experimentalism and slow, brooding dub excursions, all of which continue to feature in the Death In Vegas sonic arsenal. For live shows, Richard was the principal Death In Vegas torch-bearer, but when Tim Holmes replaced Hellier in 1998 he gained another partner in aural crime. The Vegas live show is more than just one man and his DAT, involving live musicians adding their sweat and endeavour to the clattering beats and swirling effects.

With a new album imminent, featuring contributions from Bobby Gillespie, Jim Reid and Iggy Pop, the pair are ready for action again. A tantalising mixture of the laid back and the hardcore, the Death In Vegas sound is an original flick through an imaginary record collection, celebrating all the diversity of the modern musical world. Elvis has most definitely left the building.

JW

How the stars are born

(from page 13)

Also languishing in 1995's modest mid-afternoon slots were Reef and Ash, the two playing one after the other from half past two onwards. Girl From Mars had just splashed Ash all over the charts and their live appearance at the Glastonbury Festival was a defining moment for the Downpatrick trio, just as Supergrass's show was for the Oxford boys the same weekend.

Both Reef and Ash returned in 1997, but this time Reef were headlining the Other Stage with Ash playing just before them.

For 1999, Ash are back on the Pyramid Stage, which they actually headlined triumphantly with their second set of the weekend on the Sunday night in 1997, following Steve Winwood's non-appearance. As a measure of Reef's continued rise, the band recently played a sell-out show at the Royal Albert Hall – a rock cliche, perhaps, but a spectacular achievement all the same.

The then largely ignored Catatonia appeared on the Other Stage in 1997

Their support band that night was a teenage punk quintet called A, who in 1998 could have been found on the Other Stage playing to an early morning crowd. From a midday slot at Glastonbury to a support slot at the Royal Albert Hall? Not bad for a year's work! Of course, it is the nature of the Festival that the programme of events is not guaranteed and is subject to change without notice, as I believe they say. You never know what's going on backstage or the last-minute changes that might have to be made and occasionally you find yourself in the right place at the right time.

Gomez were originally pencilled in to play the New Tent last year, but were switched to the Pyramid Stage on the Saturday morning, from where they delivered a glorious set that sealed their burgeoning reputation. And the concept of 'right place, right time' has never been truer than it was for Pulp in 1995 and the Saturday night when they became world famous.

These are the moments that make Glastonbury great and are partly the reason why the New Tent is so important. It gives more bands the opportunity to prove themselves and it gives the audience more chances to fall in love with a band they previously had never heard of. There are plenty of great bands in the New Tent this year, from the top to the bottom of the bill, so take the oppor-

the-raft.com

chemical brothers massive attack ebtg gomez placebo

Delakota

CASS BROWNE and Dez Murphy, the core of Delakota, state their ambition is to be "the widest band in the world". Not the biggest, you notice, but the widest. Delakota exist to serve the needs of music, to expand its horizons and ensure its continued growth – and they're talking about music as a global whole here. Hence the reason that their debut album was called One Love – the love in question being a love of all music – and the reason that Delakota have managed to open up a new avenue, a slip road if you like, between rock and dance. Blessedly avoiding the dead-end that was the "indie-dance" farrago of the early nineties, Delakota's sound is much more organic and groove-orientated than the lazy trick of simply slapping a breakbeat under a standard rock tune.

In fact, their sound is pointedly more dance than rock. The early single "C'mon Cincinnati" evolved from a James Brown-type instrumental groove into a full-on ten minute exploration in sound, smothered with samples, which somehow had to be edited down into a concise radio-friendly form.

As this meant chopping out Delakota's favourite bits, it never happened – such flagrant disregard for the all-powerful playlist is tantamount to heresy in the modern music industry, but then Delakota live purely for the music, remember? Nothing gets in the way of a good groove.

A national tour with UNKLE followed the band remixing for and being remixed by Irish DJ David Holmes. Meanwhile, their music was reaching more unusual ears, most notably the pair either side of pop pixie Billie's head. She apparently "absolutely loved" Delakota's album and invited them to remix her "Honey To The Bee" single, something the band were only too happy to do.

Having turned down dozens of similar projects, Billie got the nod simply because, Cass said, "When we heard her voice on DAT it sounded beautiful". And that's the Delakota ethos in a nutshell; strip away the lies that cloud your judgement to reveal the essential truth at the heart of music. Accept their invitation to surprise yourself.

JW

THE DOVES

THERE'S an enormous, warm and inviting sound unfolding from the speakers, forming a colossus of a tune that gradually expands before me, apparently sung by a man who doesn't appear to have noticed that he was being recorded.

Unless I pay close attention, I can't make out exactly what he's saying and the nature of the sound rising in stereo around him simultaneously makes me desperate to know whilst also accepting that it's not really that important in the scheme of things. All I eventually knew was that this was a song called "Rise"; it was by a band called Doves and - to complete a trinity of cool - when I finally tracked a copy down, I found it only came on 10" vinyl in a sleeve that redefined the term enigmatic.

This was a record that managed to be magnificently, elegantly ethereal whilst also featuring the biggest, fattest drum track since John Bonham first broke Led Zepplin's levee; whilst featuring the most cavernous, endlessly reverberating guitar since the Edge first trod on his delay pedal and whilst featuring the most rhythmic, lyrical and uplifting bass since "I Wanna Be Adored" ushered in the Madchester era. It's called atmosphere and Doves have it in spades.

All three members of Doves used to comprise Sub Sub, Manchester's favourite disco sons. But growing tired of grappling with a mouse and an Apple Mac and painstakingly piecing together their music bar by bar, Jimi Goodwin and brothers Jez and Andy Williams opted to abandon the sequencers and go back to basics. Technology still plays a part in capturing the music, but the creation of the Doves sound now comes courtesy of the simplicity offered by analogue guitar, drum and bass. Using these to create the densest collage of heavy pop sounds since The Cure's hazy heyday, the live Doves experience has been leaving stunned audiences across the country open-mouthed, sleeping gazelles caught napping by this muscular musical tiger. Don't say I didn't warn you.

JW

Chicks

WITH a name like Chicks, you can probably guess that they're a band of sassy punk teenagers, no strangers to irony and probably possessed of a nice line in sardonic wit far beyond their years for ones so young.

If you also reckon that there's three chicks in Chicks; that they're just finishing their sixth form years and that they come from Ireland, then my friend you're on a roll and you can pick my lottery numbers for me.

The phrase "female Ash" will undoubtedly be clinging to Chicks like music-press velcro for some time yet, a circumstance exacerbated by the supporting role Chicks played on a tour with the Downpatrick boys last summer. The girls also took advantage of the summer holiday to support the Manic Street Preachers, record radio sessions for the BBC, get themselves on telly and attract the voracious attentions of a myriad of major labels, all of which came after releasing their first single for Supremo Records, the exotically-titled Criminales, Coches, Pistolas y Chicas, during the Easter holidays. It certainly makes going inter-railing look a bit lame, doesn't it? It's all the fault of guitarist/vocalist Annie's brother, really – he gave her a tape of Riot Grrrl bands, featuring the likes of Bikini Kill and Huggy Bear, and told lil' sis to form a band pronto. Roping in friends Isabel and Lucy on bass and drums, Annie did just that and the three-piece began fashioning their enthusiastic pop-punk sound that would soon come leaping out of unsuspecting speakers.

Calling their second EP Little Monkeys With Lots Of Money earlier this year showed that all the industry high excitement surrounding Chicks wasn't having a detrimental effect on the girls' sense of pop suss and dry humour. They beat B*Witched in the NME Best New Bands poll; they'll be tearing through this summer's festivals and then the new millennium will be witness to their debut album. Catch them while they're young, dumb and full of comely virtue.

JW

Regular Fries

Described by their record label as "a diazepam-fuelled spacewalk filmed by Vincent Gallo with De La Soul and Spiritualized on the headphones"

THERE'S only two extremes with musicians. On the one hand, some bands crave publicity and court it at every opportunity, not forgetting to take themselves terribly seriously should anyone mistakenly give them a column inch or two. On the other hand, some bands just don't bother. Accordingly, they get filed in the music press pigeonhole labelled "arch-pranksters", because no-one really knows what to make of them.

Meet Regular Fries – they're one of the latter bands. Six or seven unassuming musicians, plus guests, who have just completed one of the year's more imaginative LPs, apparently created simply out of sonic curiosity and a mild ambition to plug a hole in their eclectic record collections.

Described by their record label as "a diazepam-fuelled spacewalk filmed by Vincent Gallo with De La Soul and Spiritualized on the headphones", the album Accept The Signal is what Flowered Up would have sounded like if they'd spent more time in the studio with Weatherall and what everyone hoped the Happy Mondays' comeback single would sound like. And then some.

Not afraid to use any and everything in the recording process, there are saxophones left over from old Madness and Pigbag records, some elaborate cutting from The Scratch Perverts, a little mixing hand from Death in Vegas' Tim Holmes and a complete band reworking of one tune by none other than Mercury Rev.

This is all complementary to the Fries' own work, mind, ranging from dirty, wasted grooves to blissed-out ambience. Vocals occasionally drift ambiguously in and out of the mix and whole songs teeter on the brink of collapse before heroically veering off to bigger and better things.

Stamping the skunk rock/nu-psychedelia tags into the East London pavement, their sound is both for urban summer days and heavy country nights and their live reputation is almost one of triumph in the face of adversity, the kitchen-sink approach to gigs looming large in the Fries' camp. Never dull, frequently inspired and cheerfully stupid, Regular Fries could prove to be a surprise hit in spite of themselves.

tunity to sample strange delights as well as the more familiar names.

Myself, I'm looking forward to catching Delakota and Regular Fries and my tip as a band to watch next year would be Doves – amazing live. Nothing beats that feeling of being witness to a legendary musical moment, a defining moment for band and audience – even if it's only a defining moment for you personally – and the New Tent is there to help catch those moments.

Of course, there's an element of luck as to who will go on to become the Next Big Thing, but our guide to the New Tent acts this year should help point you in the right direction. That band you've never heard of opening on the Friday morning could yet become the biggest name in rock – and even if that doesn't happen, you could still discover the best thing you hear all weekend. And remember – if it rains, this is one stage with a roof!

The Stereophonics, who opened the day's proceedings in 1997 on the Other Stage

Nojahoda

ROCK BANDS with grand ambitions? Hmm, sounds dangerously like Embrace or any one of a thousand other depressingly worthy, wearyingly self-important trad-rock bands. But you know what? Nojahoda might actually be a little different.

For instance, brothers Milo and Leo are the free-wheeling offspring of a father who co-founded the pirate station Radio Caroline back in the sixties (man) and who then took the family off to LA to open a roller disco nightclub called Flippers. No, really.

Their elder brother Atticus is in the band 12 Rounds and he helped them take their early songwriting steps, recording them in his mini studio. And when the finance fell through for their first record, engineer Phil Bagnall liked them so much that he offered to mix it for free, so the band recorded the whole thing in ten days.

Taking their name from the psychologist Jahoda's seven point normality plan (Leo couldn't find a place in this plan for him or his friends, hence No Jahoda), the band's raison d'etre is crystallised by the quest for boundary-free music. As bassist Robbie puts it: "People should remember what they like and not worry what they think they should or shouldn't like. Not worry what's cool and what's not cool." Hence the reason that the debut album, Jahoda Witness, can include everything from pop punk thrashes to lazy country and western tunes, stadium rockers and ten minute answering machine messages with full kazoo orchestra backing.

Drawing on a mixed bag of influences, from Gram Parsons and Willie Nelson to Metallica and Nirvana, the broad world-view of Nojahoda ensures that you'll never know what's coming next. They take a similarly irreverent approach to band visuals and videos, planning storylines the likes of which have never been seen before.

If you think your mind can open wide enough to let in a band who think Devo's Whip It is one of the greatest songs ever and whose favourite Playstation game is the golf-tastic "PGA Tour 96", then a Nojahoda concert is the best place for you.

JW

Little mothers

THIS probably wasn't how the West London benefits agency expected things to turn out. His local dole office, previously a soft touch for easy cash, was gradually increasing the pressure on Little Mothers' singer and songwriter Ben Gallagher to get a proper job.

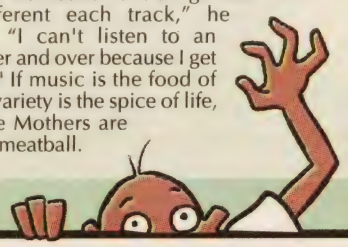
At the same time, several uneventful years of funk and blues jamming with brother Luke and drumming friend Casper Cox had produced nothing worthy of note, save for some memorable extended conversations about the funk and hip-hop greats they all admired. It seemed high time for Ben to exploit his insomnia, put these extra hours at the end of his day to good use and knuckle down to learning the art of songwriting.

All well and good, but it wasn't until the arrival of DJ and sample-friendly Toby Allen that the potential and the elements started to gel. Toby had already been recording MIDI trip-hop tracks at home under a variety of names for some years and, impressed by Ben's songs, became the fourth quarter in the folk-funk concoction that is Little Mothers.

The resulting sounds on the debut album The Worry are an attempt to combine a mutual love for Ray Davies-styled acoustic folk with an obsession for authentic hip-hop beats – as Ben says, their aim is to be "closer to hip-hop than Noel Coward". This much has certainly been achieved, but there's also a good deal of Sly and the Family Stone, Parliament and The Band in there, too – a new approach to modern street songs.

If music is the food of love and variety is the spice of life, then Little Mothers are one spicy meatball.

With three vocalists in the band, they also have a selection of flavours with which to garnish the songs and season their sound, a option dear to Ben's heart. "We wanted to have songs that were different each track," he explains. "I can't listen to an album over and over because I get sick of it." If music is the food of love and variety is the spice of life, then Little Mothers are one spicy meatball.



ONE LADY OWNER

THE white-hot sound of One Lady Owner has rung quite a few bells.

The band's raucous, melodic tunes have been compared to The Jesus and Mary Chain, Sugar, Sonic Youth, Roxy Music and The Dead Kennedys, among others.

But make no mistake. This lot aren't rehashing the Brit-grunge of the past. Instead they have forged one unique three-minute gem after another and welded them into a stunning debut album; There's Only We.

They have been described as "The most exciting band we've stumbled across all year" by NME and "absolutely astonishing" by Melody Maker.

Singer Steve Dougherty's inspiration comes from TV trash cops 'n' robbers programmes, sci-fi junk and the froth of popular culture. "My lyrics are all about escapism and cinematic imagery," he says.

One Lady Owner are refreshing because they don't give a damn about fashion, or what people think of them, or what other bands are up to.

"I can't stand trendiness, fashion does not mean anything, I wrote my songs because there was nothing out there I liked," says Steve.

Like all the best electric guitar bands, OLO (not ELO, be careful) have hummable tunes. A diet of TV theme tunes and "Born Free" maestro John Barry has given Steve an ear for great melodies.

Sometimes you may have to dig deep under electric feedback and drum thunder to pick them out, but they are there – even when bass guitarist Nathan Sudders uses his RAT bass pedal, which sounds like "a 100ft tractor being sick".

Steve's ambition is to make the soundtrack music for a film, and it shows. "Some people have compared us to the Sisters of Mercy, because I've got a deep voice, but we are not bleak, we are actually quite funny and escapist," he says. "You wouldn't say Johnny Cash was a Goth, just because his voice is deep."

The group, ranging in age from 18 (Bo the drummer) to late twenties (everyone else), met through a mutual mate from Sri Lanka. Steve had been in various bands – once with two lads who are now in Clinic – and the other four were in a group called Kid Dynamo.

After only five rehearsals above a shop in Manchester (where most of the band come from) they won an audition with Creation guru Alan McGee.

Since then they have played around 100 gigs, including Reading Festival, and this summer sees them hit the big-time with three more festivals.

They don't mix with other celebs, or music industry suits, but love the lifestyle of being on the road. On stage, they have been accused of being a pretty glum and visually boring act – of "not doing much". But they couldn't care less.

"On stage we wear what we would wear down to the pub. We can't stand people who ponce about with theatrics," says Steve. "We do what we do, make a lot of noise, we wouldn't wear stuff on stage we would not wear normally."

One Lady Owner: They do exactly what they say on the inlay sleeve.

Jim Pickard

Ooberman

THEY don't make 'em like this any more. From Liverpool via Bradford, Ooberman are a band seemingly out of time with everyone else, while still remaining one step ahead. A band that could only ever have come from England, their eclectic approach to music; their enthusiasm for sound and a healthy disregard for established music biz protocol ensures there's no second-guessing these pomp-pop guerrillas, always keeping listeners alert (if a little nervous).

Songs about emotional dislocation and spiritual pain? Ooberman do that (Shorley Wall). Songs about girls' bottoms? They do that (Sugar Bum). Songs about the untimely death of a pet rabbit? Ooberman do that, too (Honeydew). That none of these songs sound like any of the others speaks volumes about Ooberman's oeuvre.

Originating in a Bradford garage, school friends Andy Flett, brother Steve and Danny Popplewell joined forces in a failed effort to make flesh their musical ambitions. However, the call of university soon took them on separate paths, yet all three maintained the vision of the band they wanted to be – a band strong on emotional warmth, majestic choruses, intelligent lyrics and a propensity for Queen-a-like pseudo-classical arrangements. With the city of Liverpool providing Sophia Churney and Alan Kelly, as well as a creative but nurturing environment in which the Oober beast could evolve, the necessary elements were soon set in place with which to launch their skewed attack on pop music.

The erratic Ooberman story finally found direction with the release of the seven track, 10,000-selling Shorley Wall EP. Single of the week on both the Jo Whiley and Mark Radcliffe Radio One shows, as well as running out eventual single of the year in The Times, the snowball that was started rolling by Blur's Graham Coxon (who released their first single on his Transcopic label) was now gathering speed.

Bona fide Top 40 hits have followed since (Blossoms Falling) and the homespun psychedelia of the imminent debut album should cement their reputation as a band of audacious aural ambition. The Ooberman sound – it's a kind of magic.

JW

wilco

THERE'S not much going on in Illinois, USA. The wind rustling through acre after acre of wheat plains, the chugging noise of a combine harvester.

Some would call it peaceful. Some would call it boredom personified.

Here, in a satellite town called Belleville, Jeff Tweedy spent his schooldays, probably unaware he would one day front America's so-called "Last Great Rock Band".

Perhaps it's like Britain's suburbs; living in a stultifying environment gets the creative juices flowing.

It certainly worked for Tweedy, who now fronts Wilco – once called Uncle Tupelo and before that The Primitives. Their sound was the bastard child of country and rock, though luckily it inherited more features from the latter than the former. It wasn't Rawhide or Stand By Your Man, but straight-up guitar music with just a twinge of folk.

As Wilco they played the alternative college circuit trod by any American group which isn't heavy metal, boy band or generally MOR. They are still an exciting live band, with Tweedy on stage acting up the wild frontman role, giving the obligatory judo kicks and big posturing.

On record they have prolific and progressive. Their first album, AM, was rock liberally sprinkled with banjos, mandolins and violins, and was snuck out in 1995.

Album number two, Being There, appeared two years later, netting acres of positive reviews. Now, with number three, Summerteeth, in the shops, Wilco are firmly established on both sides of the Atlantic, blessing the UK charts with the wonderful single Can't Stand It.

Imagine very early REM, without the mumblings of Michael Stipe, crossed with Teenage Fanclub (remember them?). That's the Wilco sound, and it's unique.

Many Wilco fans have accused them of selling out with the new album, for deserting their twanging early noise. The fans are nostalgic for the melancholy tones and dark subject matter of the old days. How dare Wilco sound like they're having fun on Summerteeth. Tut, tut.

On the other hand, the band are still unfairly tainted with the "country" tag by lazy journalists. You can't please everyone, you see.

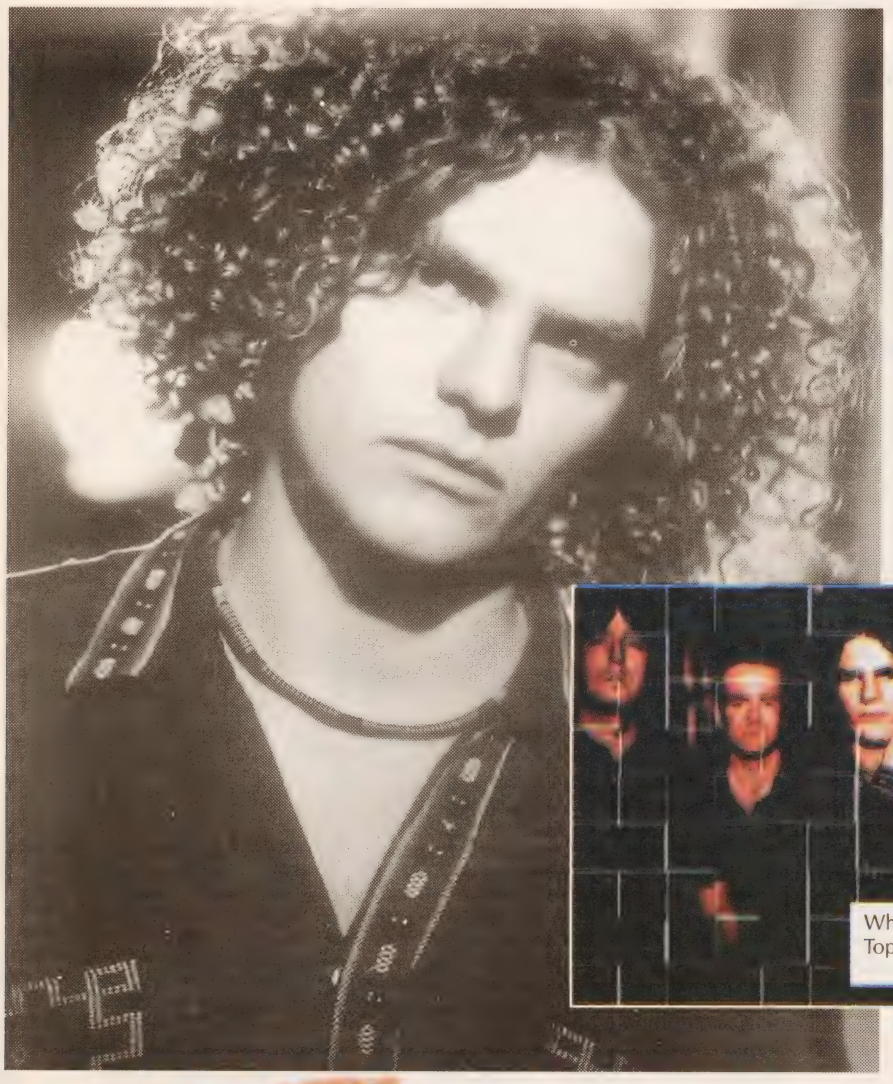
Imagine very early REM, without the mumblings of Michael Stipe, crossed with Teenage Fanclub (remember them?). That's the Wilco sound, and it's unique.

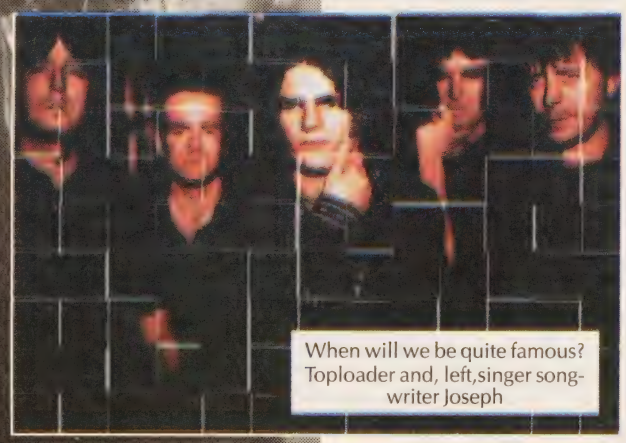
They haven't sold out. They've just evolved, matured and hit a creative peak.

Jim Pickard

NEW BANDS

TOPLOADER





When will we be quite famous? Toploader and, left,singer songwriter Joseph

ONE day he was managing a children's fun bus in Eastbourne, where grannies go for fresh sea air.

Next he was wielding his electric guitar in front of 17,000 rock fans with his band Toploader, supporting Paul Weller.

Julian Dean, aged 28, is now on the road to rock star success and it doesn't half feel good.

Hailing from Wells, just down the leafy lane from Glastonbury, it's hardly surprising that his ambition was always to play the festival.

He watched Peter Gabriel in 1994, and The Cure in 1990, and the acid jazz scene at its peak in 1993, always longing to be up there doing his thing.

He says: "Now I'm just chuffed to bits, I have wanted to play Glastonbury for ages, it is wicked, really good."

Toploader are playing The Other Stage, which is pretty impressive for a band who've only released one single, Achilles Heel.

It's a song which has invoked comparisons with Lenny Kravitz and Reef among others.

The group have just finished recording their debut album (on Sony S2), and having tucked away an appearance on TFI Friday they are on the brink of great things.

Paul Weller discovered them at the Falcon in Camden, where he invited them to join him on tour last year, which led to a slot at Reading.

Surely they must have been a bit nervous? "The bigger the stage, the more confident we are – we get nervous with three or so people but we're fine with 3,000," says Julian.

"I played one or two duff notes on tour but people didn't notice..."

And just in the past few weeks, the lads have been spotted with Lulu, Bez from the Happy Mondays and even the cast of Blue Peter. Is it all going to go to their heads?

"It's all a bit trippy," he says. "Music is all we have ever wanted to do and you don't worry about the downsides of fame and all that."

The band love to drink, but not before performing.

Even at the Glastonbury festival? "Well, we aren't playing until Sunday so it's tempting, but I think we'll have to cool it compared to the usual Glastonbury activities."

The driving force behind the band is singer-songwriter Joseph, a trained classical pianist with a cracking voice.

"He sounds like an angel, a gruff angel," says Julian, who says the band are influenced by Stevie Wonder and the Rolling Stones among others.

Toploader are here to enjoy themselves, and they want the audience to do the same.

"We will discuss politics now and again but we are not a political band particularly," he adds.

So how do you know when you've made it?

"I think you get it every step of the way, when I got a record deal I thought I'd made it, then again with TFI, then you wake up thinking there is still a long way to go," says Julian.

"It's early days for us but we're hoping that with all the festivals, we will be able to make the step from being unheard-of to quite famous."

Jim Pickard

DODGY

DODGY, purveyors of bouncy sixties-style pop goodies, have always taken a lot of stick. You see, they are called Dodgy and they are dodgy, geddit? Ha ha, not.

The threesome made their name with feel-good vintage pop which always sounded as fresh as morning dew.

They surfed the Britpop wave of the mid-nineties but stood out as among the best of the bunch.

Songs like Staying Out For The Summer and Good Enough were perfect throwaway pop – tunes which reminded you of afternoon drinking, wood pigeons and sprinklers on summer lawns.

Dodgy were the soundtrack to skinny-dipping in the sea, to playing frisbee, to larking about full stop – and they wouldn't have wanted it any other way.

The trio stuck two fingers up at the po-faced, earnest attitudes of many of their contemporaries. In short, they were good, clean fun.

The band played their first gig at a London pub, the John Bull, where already they were using the three-part harmonies which would become a trademark.

A few years later, they played a triumphant Glastonbury gig in 1997, bringing on Ray Davies for the Kinks' Tired of Waiting.

And at one time they were described by rock bible NME as "the best band in Britain - no contest".

Last year the band split up but now they are back on the block with a different line-up.

Beefed up to a five-piece since their record deal with A&M ended, original members Andy Miller and Matthew Priest have been joined by lead vocalist David Bassey, bassist Nick Abnett (from The Aloof) and keyboard player Chris Hallam.

And the band returned to the road with a debut gig at Bristol's Fleece And Firkin in May, a year after frontman Nigel Clark left.

The original band once described their attitude as delivering music "with a smile, a wink and a giggle".

Now a little older, a little wiser, Matthew Priest says the music is deeper and more soulful.

"In the past a lot of people thought Dodgy were too playful and too boisterous, but hopefully those people will catch on to us now," he explains.

They've moved on. But here's hoping they haven't lost the *joi de vivre* which made them a cut above the rest.

JP

DAVID GRAY

THE fact that David Gray is not yet an international superstar is sure proof that life is not fair.

Gray is known as a Welsh-born folk singer but his songs are pure, perfect pop, with the most hummable melodies imaginable.

Why he is playing the New Bands stage is a mystery. He set up his first band, The Prawns, aged 16 — about 15 years ago.

And he released his first album, A Century Ends, way back in 1993.

Proof that he is much more accessable than his "folk" tag suggests is evident from the many bands he has supported on tour; including The Auteurs, Kirsty MacColl and Radiohead.

His third album, Sell Sell Sell, followed a signing to EMI America, which Gray broke off a few years later.

Now with his own label, iht Records, he has released the album White Ladder — and if good songs are gems, this is a diamond mine. Gray himself says the album is "the antithesis of big budget sterility...recorded for next to nothing and doing nothing by the book."

There is an acoustic side to his husky-voiced music, but don't expect mandolins and hurdy-gurdies; his most recent songs have featured electronic samples as much as traditional instruments.

White Ladder included the song "This Year's Love" which was the title track for the Kathy Burke film.

Burke played a backing singer in Gray's band; a high-profile stunt which helped push the album to the verge of platinum sales success.

Joan Baez, who knows about these things, once called him the best lyricist since Bob Dylan.

With a fantastic new single to plug, Babylon, Gray is out and about on the festival circuit this summer, with Galway Arts Festival, Slaine Castle and Fleadh to follow Glastonbury.

Fingers crossed, this should be David Gray's year.

JP

ULTRASOUND

MOST rock bands are prone to grandiose declarations along the lines of "I seriously believe that we are the saviours of rock 'n' roll" – it comes with the territory. Ultrasound are cheerfully no exception, making that very claim several months prior to the release of their gargantuan debut album, Everything Picture.

However, where most bands resolutely fail to live up to their own hype, Ultrasound have evolved into a unique musical proposition, an electric blend of Sonic Youth, Pink Floyd, My

Bloody Valentine and Joy Division, singer Andrew 'Tiny' Wood wistfully (and modestly) maintaining that "We've only really ever wanted to turn on the world."

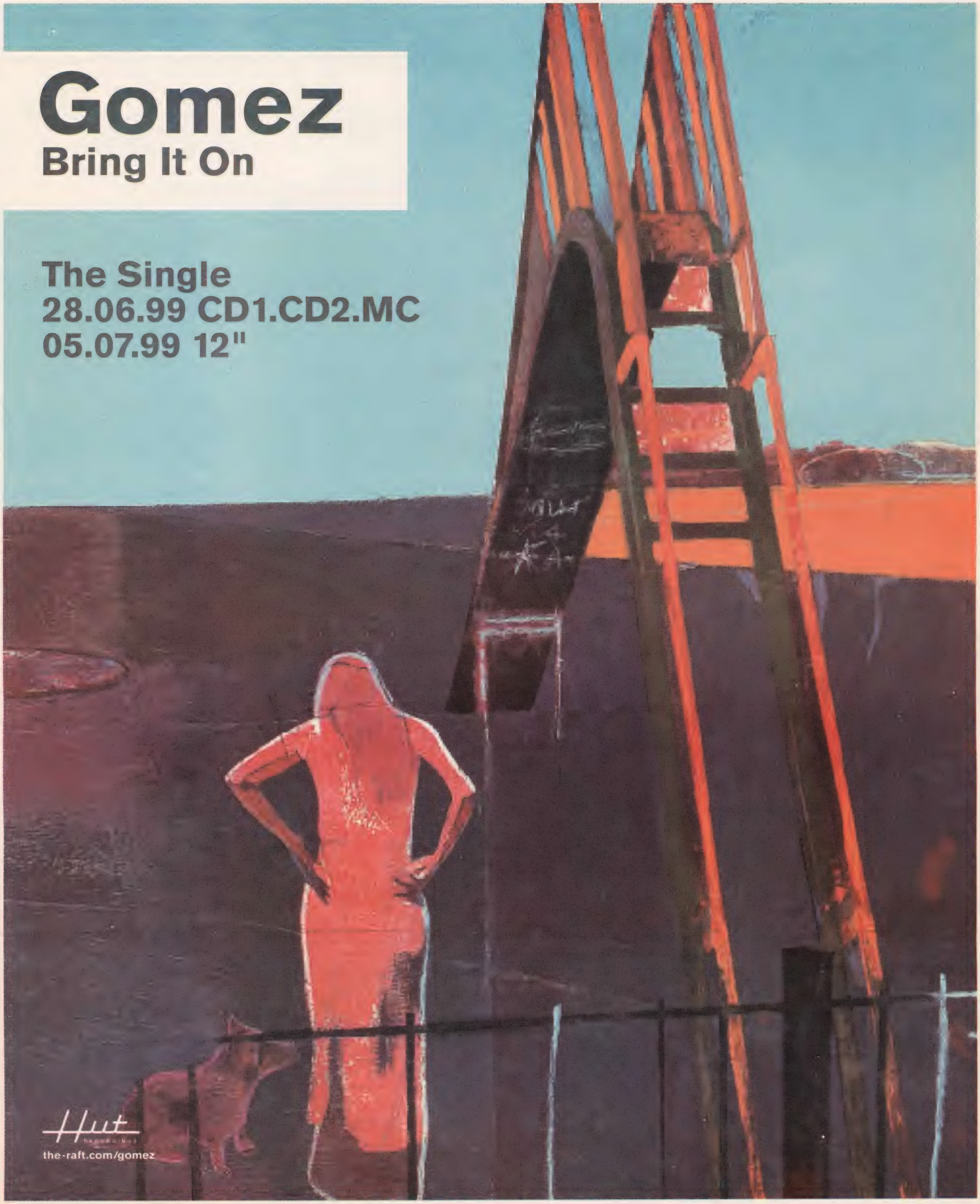
However, the two years since they first bowled over the music press at an NME Unsigned showcase have seen the band's fortunes wax and wane somewhat. Early singles and concerts were feted as monumental moments in rock, phrases like "Ultrasound crush the opposition like a supernova zapping a meteorite shower" crystalising their blooming reputation, and their bare-arsed shenanigans on the Red or Dead catwalk landed them on the front pages of national newspapers.

But then the album's release date gave new meaning to the term "long-awaited", finally crashing into the record racks months overdue as a whopping 88-minute double CD or (get this prog-rock fans) triple vinyl set. The delay tested the patience of the music press, the NME aptly describing the record as "a Zeppelin of ideas straining to leave the ground" and concluding its review with the words "late and far too long".

But what sort of record did they honestly expect from a band as comfortable with 20 minute wig-outs as they are with scorching salvational rock nuggets? Live, Ultrasound can blow away all doubts and journalistic misgivings, the songs sweetly enhanced by performance and personality. At the heart of it all is a passion and determination simply to be the best band in the world for the sake of rock's future. This, coupled with the actual ability to create the transcendental sounds erupting inside their collective head, means that if they only ever reach half as high as they dream, it will still be higher than most of their contemporaries. Are you ready to fly?

Gomez
Bring It On

The Single
28.06.99 CD1.CD2.MC
05.07.99 12"



Hut recordings
the-raft.com/gomez

SATURDAY

TRAVIS

WITH their debut single All I Wanna Do Is Rock, Travis set out their stall. Taking classic rock to its most timeless conclusion, they mix a Neil Young blues ethic and an uncomplicated directness. Despite the same recipe of guitars and throaty vocals as Oasis, Travis are from the romantic side of town, a more finely crafted set-up. Either way they were soon supporting Oasis and in return Noel Gallagher offered a string of plaudits and even appeared on a live version of All I Wanna Do Is Rock.

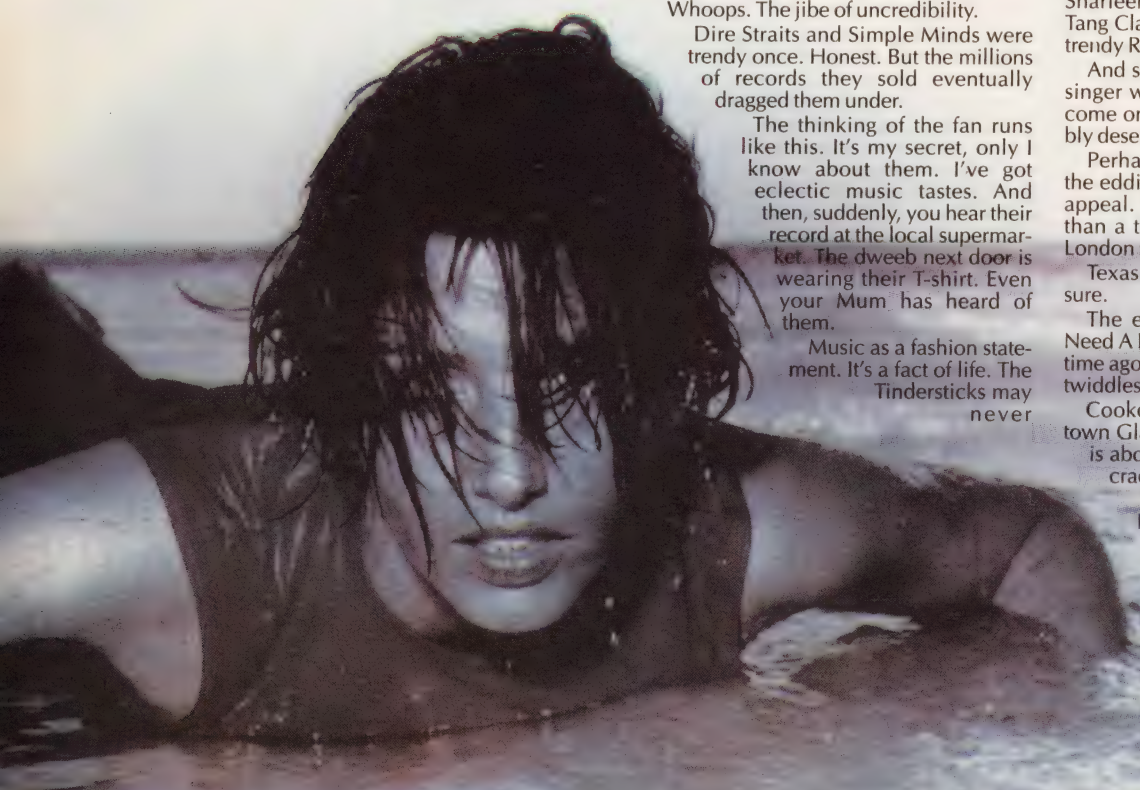
The Travis line-up of Fran Healy with his melodic rasp Andy Dunlop and his fuzzy guitars Dougie Payne on bass and Neil Primrose on the sticks was finalised in Glasgow in May '96. They were soon getting attention, not for the exuberant though lovetorn character of their music, but rather for their interview technique; encouraging a sense of normality about what they did they were almost striving for anonymity. It was a kind of let the music speak for itself ethic.

But that didn't last as Fran developed a rent-a-quote persona, but not in the usual rock star mould. With quaint advice on the best way to ride a horse, the theory that "all art is feminine", and the Healy paradigms on relationships; there's been an unashamed honesty in what Travis do.

For laddish, almost blissful tales of failed love, and spiralling but ragged epics look no further than Travis. The cradle snatch rock of U16 Girls, the good riddance snarl of Good Feeling and the doomed romance of More Than Us – Travis are rock's answer to Barry White, crooning about broken hearts in a way that would rouse even the most hard hearted.

You should have heard the new album by now, or at least been pleasured by melancholic beauty of Easter single Writing To Reach You. Front man Fran reckons the album's a more mellow affair than the first, partly because he's "fed up jumping about the stage like an idiot". Well why not see if Glastonbury can get him jumping.

Daniel Jones



Texas

IT is hard for a rock band to remain "cool" once the platinum discs start to roll in.

For many of the groups which sail too close to the winds of popularity there is a sudden crash.

Whoops. The jibe of uncredibility.

Dire Straits and Simple Minds were trendy once. Honest. But the millions of records they sold eventually dragged them under.

The thinking of the fan runs like this. It's my secret, only I know about them. I've got eclectic music tastes. And then, suddenly, you hear their record at the local supermarket. The dweeb next door is wearing their T-shirt. Even your Mum has heard of them.

Music as a fashion statement. It's a fact of life. The Tindersticks may never outsell Status Quo, but then they will never be an object of ridicule.

Texas, one of the big-hitters at this year's festival, are one of the few bands who can manage that precarious balancing act.

The soft rock White On Blonde album sold four million copies, yet songstress Sharleen Spiteri hangs out with scary Wu-Tang Clan's Method Man, RZA and ever-so-trendy Rae & Christian.

And she is taken more seriously than any singer who pens lyrics such as "come on, come on, come on, come on" could possibly deserve to be. Curious.

Perhaps Sharleen's blatant disregard for the eddies of fashion just add to the band's appeal. "A good song is to me worth more than a thousand rave reviews in a trendy London magazine," she says.

Texas have never stagnated, that's for sure.

The eighties rock of debut hit I Don't Need A Lover was left by the wayside a long time ago, replaced by electronica and studio twiddles.

Cooked up in Spiteri's studio in home town Glasgow, the latest Album, The Hush, is above all a vehicle for her undeniably cracking voice.

They've been at it for a decade. Hard to believe, but Sharleen was only 17 when the band started out, taking its name from the Wim Wenders' movie Paris, Texas.

Co-founder John McElhone was already one of pop's old lags back then – he had enjoyed success of sorts with eighties bands Altered Images and White Savages, who once toured with The Eurythmics – but the teenage Sharleen was an utter novice.

Soon after, I Don't Want a Lover piled into the charts, and the black-clothed, naff-hairstyled band were the toast of the times.

After their successful first album, Southside, the Texas members had no shortage of pocket money.

But what goes up must come down – spectacularly, in their case. After two duff albums, the media condemned Texas to Siberia, and as Sharleen admits: "We were sinking, toes, ankles, knees ..."

And then, as if by magic, and thanks to sycophantic support from Chris Evans, it was payback time.

In the UK, the tunefully mainstream album White on Blonde changed hands like free burgers in a playground.

Not only did it treat the number one slot like a comfy armchair, lounging there for week upon week, but the band scored five consecutive top ten singles to boot.

In the States, things went a little less smoothly, and only 100,000 copies were sold.

"Mercury had completely f***ed up White on Blonde – the promotion was shit, the distribution was shit," remarks Sharleen in her forthright Glaswegian style.

But the failure to take the States by storm – hardly unique for British bands – was a pretty minor fly in the ointment.

The follow-up album, The Hush, has got a lot to live up to but Sharleen has no doubts about its worth.

"For me, this new record is not just our best yet, this is the Texas album we've been building up to throughout our entire history," she says.

The first single to be peeled off The Hush has already gone down a storm, no surprises there. In Our Lifetime has a jaunty Cantonese hook and is as addictive as opium, even though it is just as sick-making in excess.

Sharleen's voice sounds fantastic and the tune is ever-so-catchy – it just sounds far too polished. And there's the nub of the Texas dilemma. Great melodies, but suffocated under layers of studio production.

But live, Texas make a much more exciting proposition. On stage, the songs can jettison their studio anchors and take on a life of their own.

Which is why you've no excuses to miss this gig.

Jim Pickard

the-raft.com

news previews video chat competitions

FOR over a decade Orbital have been the most pioneering electronic band in the world, inspiring dance and ambient music fans the world over with their unique brand of ambient techno.

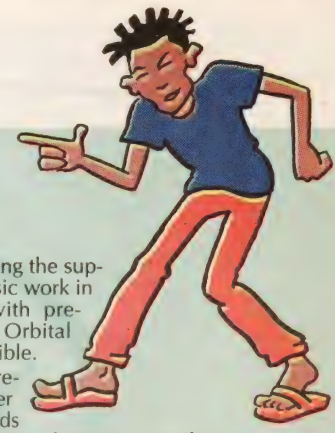
Since the days of acid house and warehouse raves, Orbital have laid down the soundtrack for disgruntled and newly liberated youth to lose it to.

Crossing boundaries of musical genre and defying definition, they produce beautiful and subtle dancehouse cum techno music.

Their first single, Chime, summed up the feelings of a generation. It hit number 17 in the charts in 1990 and the brothers Hartnoll (Phil and Paul) took to the Top of the Pops stage.

Hailing from sleepy Sevenoaks, they have always maintained an air of being ordinary guys who just happen to make the best music of their generation.

Leaving the battle of ego and image to others in their peer group, they epitomise the best aspects of so-called 'faceless' techno. Where the music is everything, who needs flashy costumes and equipment-smashing stage show climaxes? Not them.



Their performances are notable for crossing the supposed boundary of making studio-based music work in a live setting. Where others flounder with pre-recorded material and the odd live synth, Orbital have always tried to play as much live as possible.

OK, so the sounds and loops are pre-recorded, but the genius is the way they alter the music as they go, morphing sublime sounds into hypnotic beats, with an ear for improvisation that puts many famous guitar bands to shame. No two shows are the same.

For proof of their live ability, look no further than their fun but effective use of Belinda Carlisle AND Bon Jovi in the same breakbeat-soaked live version of Halcyon. How any band can take two such tragic examples of Eighties blandness and make them sound good played at the same time is anyone's guess. But they did.

Discovered as a live force in the early Nineties at the brilliant Megadog events (along with luminaries such as Underworld, Spooky and Eat Static), they went on to storm Glastonbury in 1994 before a legendary appearance headlining the festival in 1995.

Add to that headlining performances at Tribal Gathering in consecutive years and Alexandra Palace on New Year's Eve 1996, not to mention festivals worldwide, and it would not be an exaggeration to name them the best live dance band ever. Anyone who can appear on Later with Jools Holland without a guitar or vocalist (playing Satan) has to have a special knack with technology.

As far as their music is concerned they have just released their fifth, and perhaps best, album to date, Middle of Nowhere, which doesn't contain one dud song.

Their first contained Chime and the brilliant Belfast amongst others. Their supposedly 'difficult' second was simply seminal (the brown one including Lush, Halcyon, the list goes on). Snivilisation was the closest they came to a concept album and it still didn't sound bad. 1996's In Sides was how all soundtracks should sound.

And now we have the album of the year – along with the Brown album their most completely rounded release – with tracks that range from melodic masterpieces (Way Out, Nothing Left) to more metallic (but still delightful) tracks like Nowhere to Run and the best use of a stylophone since Rolf Harris.

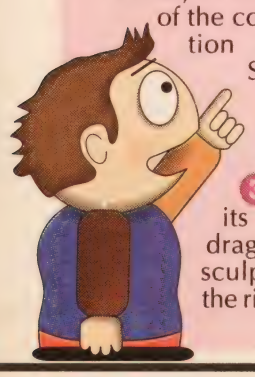
Famed for their torch-like spectacles and bobbing bald heads, if their recent UK tour is anything to go by they are on their best form yet. More perfectly improvised tunes and a fantastic new Doctor Who sample got a phenomenal reaction. Brixton Academy saw the brothers smiling and enjoying themselves more than ever – with Phil even escaping from the prison-like keyboard racks for a brief dance. Whoever said a techno gig was faceless!

Orbital continue to carve their own unique sound and produce music more beautiful, delicate and yet irresistibly danceable than anyone else. There is no one more appropriate to headline a stage in the last Glastonbury of the Millennium. If you do one thing this year make sure it is watching, dancing and dreaming to the best band at the best festival – and that means Orbital at Glastonbury.

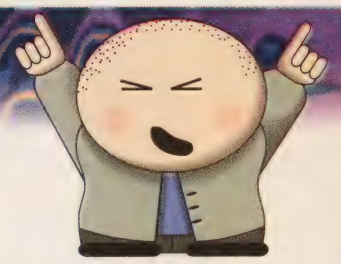
Gareth Scurlock

Amazing But True

1. The Festival has the world's biggest cinema - 30,000 people watched Pulp Fiction on site two years ago and this year Notting Hill joins the line-up of new release and art house films.
2. The Festival has its own mini stone circle, in the shape of the constellation of the Swan.
3. It has its own dragon (a sculpture in the river).
4. Organisers are planting a Festival Forest near Thornbury to help make the event carbon-neutral.
5. Be warned - 169 (ok) people broke their ankles trying to get over the perimeter fence last year.
6. There are eight main stages and will be 1,500 performances.
7. Good news - there are 1,708 lavatories, and 324 metres of urinals.
8. The Festival raises money for Greenpeace, Oxfam and Wateraid - and has given £524,000 to Oxfam alone.
9. Six miles of pipes were laid to serve the site this winter.
10. The plot of the Radio 4 Soap opera The Archers saw Kate Archer give birth at the Festival, and this year Brookside features a Festival plot.



paul oakenfold



SUCH is the stellar profile of dance music nowadays that DJs have acquired the glamorous cachet which was once the exclusive preserve of rock stars.

And of all the current generation of dance superstars, few can rival the reputation of 32-year old Paul Oakenfold, who is playing three separate slots on Saturday evening on The Other Stage. Though he denies his tag as the highest-paid DJ in the world, there is no doubt that he must be minted; born and bred in Mile End and Streatham, he now dines at The Ivy and tours with U2, for whom he has done remixes.

Having recently finished a two-year stint at Liverpool's top club Cream, he is now on the Radio 1 dance team.

Once a month, the Essential Selection broadcasts an hour-long set from a city somewhere in the world, and so far Oakenfold has thrilled Sydney, Miami, Berlin and Moscow.

Last year he performed 46 shows in the U.S., non-stop touring, like a band, with a different city every evening.

Oakenfold's greatest moment was as producer on the Happy Mondays' album Pills 'N' Thrills And Bellyaches in 1990, honing the shambolic Mancunian sound into one of the greatest LPs of the decade.

His other claims to fame include signing Salt 'n' Pepa and former Fresh Prince turned Hollywood heavyweight Will Smith to Champion Records.

In 1989 he opened his own club, Spectrum, cashing in on the Summer of Love rave scene as it swept across the country.

Oakenfold has now been in dance music for 15 years, having started work as a chef and cocktail waiter in his teens.

Now, at the pinnacle of his career, he ranks alongside Pete Tong, Judge Jules and Carl Cox as one of the aristocrats of the British turntables.

JP

MANIC STREET PREACHERS

FROM despair to where? A reasonable question. But there's little reason to worry about it in 1999. It has been more than adequately answered through a line of albums rich with continually unfolding glories, numerous accolades and widespread acclaim.

When it was first posed back in '93 the solution wasn't particularly evident; nothing was certain at that point. There was a formula, but while academically coherent with strong foundations, it was changeable and prone to irregular movement.

Much water has since passed under the proverbial bridge in the Welsh valleys.

Taking a snapshot of the Manic Street Preachers in their present chart-topping, sell-out touring, award-winning splendour, it is perhaps easy to forget that they do have serious history.

Theirs is a story of wanting and reaching. Of satisfaction and grief. Of loss and achievement. As with all truly classic bands, their climb up the frayed rope-ladder of fame and notoriety has been a toilsome battle with the forces of gravity. The threat of falling down has however always been overcome by the conquering of yet another rung.

In addition to the unarguably epic nature of their music, the Manic's story reaffirms their status as one of the most important and deservedly lauded British groups in recent memory.

They exploded out of a musical no-man's-land back in 1990, making it their own with Generation Terrorists, an album as stark and anarchic as its title hinted. Taking inspiration from points as distant as Public Enemy, the Sex Pistols and Kylie Minogue and also fuelled by a hatred of most things, it was a breath of filthy air to a music industry built around the concept of predictability and familiarity.

It was, and still is, as accomplished, as powerful and as lyrically fresh as it was angry, discontented and confrontational. And while much time has passed and many situations have changed since its release, few have managed to write a song as resplendently beautiful and awe-inspiring as Motorcycle Emptiness.

They were nothing short of fired-up at this point. They were different, far more out-there than any of the mainstream they were attempting to crack, and this only fuelled their ambition more. They wanted to be the biggest band in the world and, more importantly, believed that they could be.

If one thing has been idiosyncratic of the Manic Street Preachers from the start it has been their belief in impact. Whether through the intricacy and intellect of their lyrics, or the jagged attention-grabbing severity (or subtlety) of their music, their ability to plant seeds of thought through song is a talent that few can seriously claim to have, but one which the Manics have always thrived on.

The second album, Gold Against the Soul, was a slightly more refined affair, but lost none of the lyrical sharpness that had characterised their debut. However, it was their third record, The Holy Bible, which first gave a real insight into the torment lurking beneath the band's taut skin. It still remains the most emotionally explicit of all their offerings, hinting at just how troubled their waters really were.

While previous lyrics had, on the whole, been focused outwards, typified by a refusal to conform and rampant attacks on society's failings, The Holy Bible's poetic descriptions of some very vivid and extreme feelings have since been read as an open letter foreseeing the downward spiral that led towards the most defining event of their career.

It is very difficult, almost impossible, to ignore the disappearance of guitarist and principal lyricist Richey James Edwards. The repercussions have determined all that has followed.

Some critics have questioned his importance in the general scheme of things, especially as he infamously had little to do with the recording process and was often far from a competent live musician. Much time could be spent debating the complexities behind the reasons and consequences of his abstruse departure, but it can't be denied that it was Richey's dark poetry and considered imagery that, in essence, made the Manic Street Preachers.

Considering the extent of their loss and the magnitude of expectation awaiting their return, it is to their credit that they've continued to climb, driven to somehow eclipse all they'd done before.

Everything Must Go was as sterling a comeback album as could have been expected, perhaps more so. A Design For Life was a flawless introduction to it, slowly burgeoning towards its climax, reaching out to touch an expanse of emotion and inquiry along the way.

Poignant as a word is perhaps too gentle, too ordinary, to describe their return to the pubiic's gaze. But it was poignant. The quality of the music reached out and touched more people than ever before. The impact may have become more delicate, but what use is a loose canon anyway if it's less effective at firing ammunition?

Last year's This Is My Truth Tell Me Yours was the final step in their establishment as proud bearers of a crown that's been awaiting their arrival since they began. They have finally gained the mass respect they deserve, Nicky Wire has flowered into the wordsmith of a generation and James Dean Bradfield and Sean Moore continue to effortlessly create the extraordinary musical scroll for their messages and images.

As a live band they have never been so together and as personalities they have never been so distinct.

James is as much a ball of blood, sweat and tears on-stage as he is tortured, elegant and gentle. Sean is a reassuring figure of composure, holding together the complexities that flutter before him. And Nicky is still as much at home in a dress or with a skipping rope as he is in a T-shirt declaring 'I love hoovering'.

You can only wonder at what the future holds, but you can bet they're not looking down quite yet.

For the moment though, a Saturday night Glastonbury headline is as good a reward as any for the journey they've endured to get here.

James Berry

Manics photos by Kerry-Ann Hedges

the-raft.com tomorrow's tunes nowww

THE Cardigans were one of pop music's best kept secrets until fairly recently.

Four men in black, with a beautiful blonde singer, Nina Persson. Nothing special there.

But Nina was one of nature's miracles. The voice of a femme fatale, a minx, both impish and cruel.

As fragile as crystal or strong as steel, she sang with a lazy authority which stamped its mark on every song they ever did.

Songs like Travelling with Charlie or Carnival were precious, polished gems, while Hey! Get Out Of My Way was a tongue-in-cheek show-biz belter.

The sound was bittersweet, as were the lyrics. One minute she would be singing about her garden party or boyfriend. Then there would be the putdown. The sting in the tail.

The Cardigans made the big-time with Lovefool, a hit song in the Di Caprio love flick Romeo and Juliet.

The track was on the album First Band on the Moon, the follow-up to debut The Cardigans.

For month upon month, the airwaves of Europe and America buzzed with the chorus, "Love me, love me, say that you love me."

The irony of the lyrics was typically Cardigans. The naive girl, begging to be told she was loved whether it was true or not.

The hit drew a line in the sand for the Scandinavian group, leaving behind the coy, wistful songs with which they made their name.

Suddenly, they were propelled from cult following to multi-following, the Lovefool video playing on every MTV screen from Peru to Timbuctoo.

MTV killed the radio stars, complained the old fans, nostalgic for the band's original sound.

But the sea change in The Cardigans' style is now a fact of life, for better or worse.

Comparisons with Garbage are inevitable and pretty accurate. The new sound is grungy and electric guitar-driven.

Recent hits, My Favourite Game and Erase and Rewind, may have charted well.

The band are now media stars, pin-ups and enjoy real global popularity.

It's just a shame they had to grow up.

Jim Pickard

STRAW

BRISTOL rock quartet Straw are one of the most exciting new bands around.

Though they have been playing live for only a year, they have already supported the likes of Gomez and Space. It's been a rapid rise to the (almost) top.

Recent album Shoplifting was one of those records of which only a British band are capable, boasting surreal lyrics about spacemen and vampires and catchy tunes steeped in I am the Walrus vibes.

The words are off-beat but the music never misses a beat, and the album has some real corkers, such as pop hit The Aeroplane Song.

The sheer originality of Straw songs like Weird Superman and Moving to California has invoked comparisons with Scouse mould-breakers Space. It's the sort of music that leaves grown pub rockers weeping into their guitars as they realise they will never reach such heights.

And Mother Fame has already beckoned her gnarly fingers. In the last year Straw have signed to WEA, played TFI Friday and laughed as drummer Andy Nixon was named as one of Britain's most eligible bachelors in Company magazine.

The latter achievement was not something Andy took too seriously: "It was just an excuse to get some free drink, but I got loads of stick from the rest of the band and there weren't hordes of women chasing me."

The band started when college friends Mattie and Roger, who were already writing and recording songs, met chemist Duck, now the keyboard wizard. Drummer Andy was lured from the band Kings of Infinite Space.

What set Straw apart was that they were the first Bristol guitar band since The Blue Aeroplanes to take a successful bite of the pop apple.

The high profile of acts like Portishead, Reprazent and Tricky has labelled the city as a dance centre, making it harder, ironically, for rock bands to flourish.

The creative impetus in Bristol is towards trip-hop, hip-hop, drum 'n' bass and techno. Not the old guitar-drums-bass chestnut.

But Straw, with their defiantly cheesy organs and unusual techno effects, stand out from the crowd like Jo Guest at a croquet convention.

Eye-catching, ear-catching, crowd-pleasing, day-seizing music with balls.

JP

super furry animals

THEY may be from the valleys, but they are at a weird and wonderful peak.

The eccentric, rocket-fuelled pop of the Super Furry Animals was at its glorious best in recent single Northern Lights, the best indie-stomp since Supergrass's Alright.

Love them or like them, it would be impossible to hate them. With infectious melodies and an impressive workrate – three albums and a collection of B-sides since 1993 – they are a top live band.

From the joyous rant of God! Show Me Magic off the debut Fuzzy Logic, to the quirky tunes of their latest album Guerilla, a good time is virtually guaranteed.

Yes, they sometimes sing in Welsh. But please, listen without prejudice.

Curious fact: Rhys Ifans, now famous as Hugh Grant's scruffy housemate in Notting Hill, was once a member of the fledgling Super Furries.

JP

BURN AWAY THE BLUES WITH A TRIP TO THE GREEN FIELDS

Pre-Millennium tension is set to grip the Green Fields this year as new age meets the New Age in the last festival of the century.

But Y2K bugs and planes falling out of the sky are not the worry – the burning issue here is how to enter the next 1,000 years without bad vibes.

Conflicts like Kosovo, the Gulf and more minor day-to-day irritations have left humanity with some serious negative baggage, according to the Green Fielders.

And burning is the answer. The sky above the Sacred Space in King's Meadow is set to be lit up on Saturday night as a 40ft Millennium Messenger burns our troubles away.

"We're building a large willow sculpture, a messenger to the gods," Green Fields co-ordinator Liz Elliott explained.

"We will set fire to it on Saturday night and it will take away all the negativity of the last century and people's personal worries and fears. It should be a very powerful experience," she said.

Glastonbury's Green Fields are the festival's focus for healing, crafts, green or alternative technologies and lifestyles.

Spaces like the Tipi Field, Field of Avalon or the Green Futures and Greenpeace fields help to make Glastonbury unique among music festivals.

For many festival-goers they are a village of their own and some people seldom stray from outside the relaxed atmosphere of the fields beyond the railway line.

But for anyone who has not entered the Green Fields before there are some not-to-be missed experiences on offer this year

It is easy to feel cut-off from the world outside the festival, but in these fields political and conscience issues are never that far away.

Every night at midnight three tantric yoga teachers from the Healthy Happy Holy Organisation (3HO) are set to lead midnight meditations in the Stone Circle on the crisis in Kosovo.

Liz said: "Most of us are peace-loving people and the war is affecting us and worrying us. It's what the Greens are all about, living in tune with the world, and that includes people.

"It's about sustainable living and to do that you must live in a simple way, finding an inner contentment because you are not straining all the time.

"But it is not all going to be politics and deep, gloomy thought – to counter-balance all the negativity we are going to have prayer flags where people can write their own messages and wishes.

"And there are lots of beautiful, healing things in the Green Fields, hundreds of healers and crafts people and gardens and calm. It's a lot more tranquil than some of the festival.

"People can try everything, from different arts like sculpture to types of healing or dance or just joining us in meditation or talking with people about their philosophies and lifestyles.

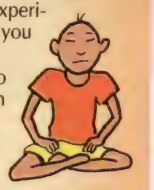
"We've been living in a kind of zombie zone for the past couple of years because of all the mud but hopefully this year it will be really special."

Hundreds of healers, artists, astrologers, musicians and craftsmen converge on the Green Fields every year, bringing a massive range of skills.

Many of the artists are happy to share their skills and teach festival-goers anything from classical stone sculpture to body-painting.

The many healers offer therapies for every possible ailment, with unusual treatments like didgeridoo therapy sharing a field with more mainstream alternative remedies like chiropracty or reflexology.

A small fee is usually payable for any of the healing experiences, but most people only ask that you pay whatever you can afford, or even barter with a skill of your own.



During the day the Green Fields are full of chances to try everything under the sun, and by night it has an atmosphere totally unlike the buzz of the main festival.

So even if midnight meditation is not your scene, make sure you make time to wander beyond the railway line this festival – there is much more there than just a haven for hippies.

Susie Moon

THIS year's festival will be earning a small fortune for lots of charities.

There will also be a drive to raise money to help the ransacked villages of Kosovo, which need all the help they can get.

Maps of Glastonbury, given out at the information centre, are free.

But organisers would appreciate it if you handed over a small contribution, which will go directly to the Kosovo Refugees Appeal.

Because Virgin Records have sponsored the map, all money raised can go straight to the charity.

"It is a nice idea, it seemed really well supported, and I hope people will be generous with their donations," said information co-ordinator Stephen Abrahall.

mishka

SOME suggest he may never have seen a comb in his life. Others reckon he looks like he was raised by wolves on a desert island.

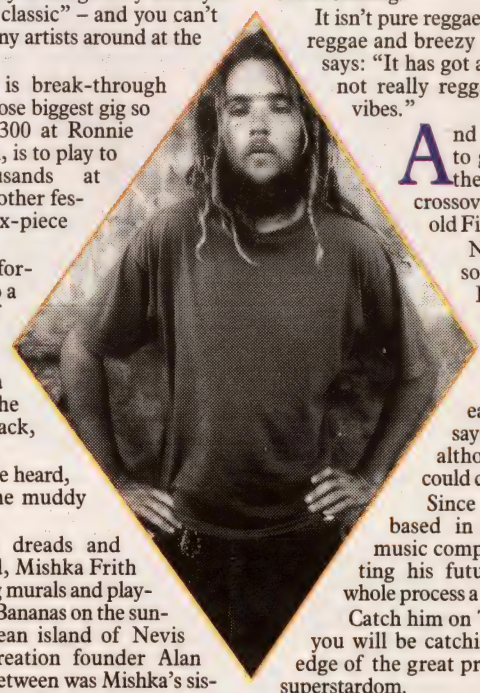
But Robinson Crusoe looks aside, Mishka is set to take the world by storm with a debut album of astonishing maturity.

He is only 24 years old, but the beach dude has written an array of songs truly worthy of the designation "classic" – and you can't say that about many artists around at the moment.

This summer is break-through time. Mishka, whose biggest gig so far has been to 300 at Ronnie Scott's in London, is to play to tens of thousands at Glastonbury and other festivals with a six-piece backing band.

"I'm looking forward to playing to a large number of people, I've never played anything like a festival before," he drawls in a laid-back, Caribbean voice.

"From what I've heard, Glastonbury is the muddy one," he suggests.



Blond Rasta dreads and wispy beard, Mishka Frith was painting murals and playing in a bar called Bananas on the sun-drenched Caribbean island of Nevis when he met Creation founder Alan McGee. The go-between was Mishka's sister, singer-songwriter Heather Nova.

The singer was at first reluctant to take the commercial plunge – and in interviews he expresses no interest whatsoever in money or the material world.

His was a childhood spent on beaches and yachts, with only sporadic schooling, an upbringing of sailing, sunshine and music.

He'd rather be playing his guitar or windsurfing. He says: "Essentially I'm a Rasta, I don't have a philosophy except respect for God – I'm not religious in the normal sense, but I am spiritual."

Mishka's laid-back, world-weary voice is very versatile. Whether he sounds placid, or sad, or happy, there is always a real depth to his vocals.

Give You All the Love, which has already brushed against the UK charts, is only a hint of other treats in store.

His sound is reminiscent of early Bob Marley – imagine songs such as Kaya, or The Sun is Shining.

It isn't pure reggae, but a hybrid of folk, reggae and breezy pop. Mishka himself says: "It has got a reggae beat but it is not really reggae, it's just acoustic vibes."

And it is a safe prediction to guess that he will be the biggest reggae crossover success since good old Finlay Quaye.

Not that Mishka sounds much like Finlay – his sound is much sparser and simpler.

The debut album came out in early June and Mishka says he is pleased with it, although "I always feel I could do better."

Since March he has been based in England, watching music company strategists plotting his future and finding the whole process a little tedious.

Catch him on The Other Stage and you will be catching him right on the edge of the great precipice which is pop superstardom.

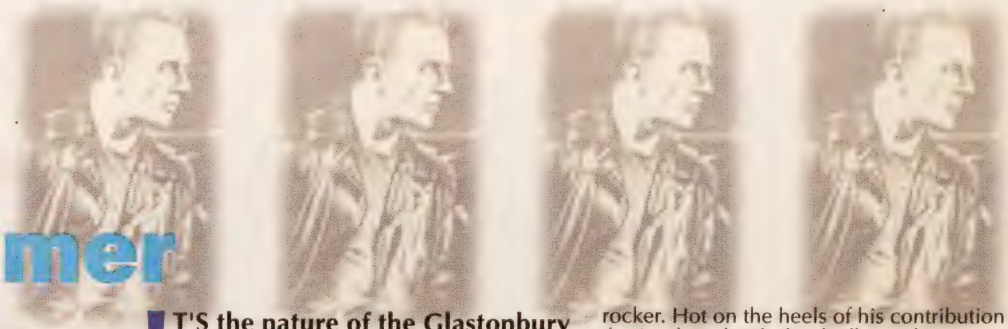
"I'm not really ambitious, it would be nice to sell loads of records to reach lots of people, but I don't look to be famous, I just want to play music," he maintains.

And has the early praise – the comparisons with the two Bobs (Marley and Dylan) – gone to his head?

"I take it all with a grain of salt," he says.

Jim Pickard

Joe Strummer



IT'S the nature of the Glastonbury Festival that every year the newest pop whippersnappers line up alongside members of the old guard. The latter is usually represented by the likes of Sting or Steve Winwood – legends, certainly, and not without musical worth, but not much of an inspiration to today's lip-curling young turks. This year will be different. This year Joe Strummer is playing.

It's almost certain that very few people will be asking themselves "Joe who?" For anyone who still doesn't know, Joe Strummer fronted The Clash, absolutely one of the best British rock bands ever – the band the Manic Street Preachers based their entire career on and the band still namechecked today by everyone from Afghan Whigs to The Offspring.

But this is guaranteed to be much more than just another nostalgic trip for another ageing rocker. Hot on the heels of his contribution to the South Park 'Chef Aid' album, there's a new record deal and a whole new batch of songs currently being recorded, to which he cryptically refers by saying "I've kept my powder dry. I'm back in the swim at the same level as everybody else creatively and musically." Having finally freed himself from a life sentence contract with Sony, he once again has the opportunity to tell it like it should be told, although he's not so proud as to ignore his Clash legacy. "If you go to see the Bee Gees play, you wanna hear 'Massachusetts' or 'Stayin' Alive'. So we'll be playing some cool Clash hits like 'London Calling'", he promises.

Much of Joe Strummer's charm and lasting appeal centres around his uncomplicated belief in the power of music and his ongoing passion for new sounds, a rare enough quality in a business swamped by bloated egos. He's still excited about music, which in turn should make his performance exciting. "The world needs good stuff to come out," he explains. "We're up to our necks in dross and we need good records, films and books." Chances are that Joe Strummer's got the first of those three sorted.

Jonathan Wilson

The Corrs

COMPRISING three sisters (Andrea, Sharon, Caroline), a brother with a guitar (Jim) and an Irish theme, the four Corrs siblings are the latest band from "across the water" to make it big in Britain, America and the rest of the world.

The three sisters got into music after small parts in Alan Parker's film "The Commitments", and recruited their brother into the band. A chance meeting with the American Ambassador to Ireland in a small Dublin club had the band travelling to the States to play in Boston during World Cup '94. The unsigned, unknown band from Dundalk were quickly snapped up by Atlantic Records and have never looked back.

After signing to Atlantic, they released two albums. The most recent of these is Talk On Corners, which has sold more than 8 million copies worldwide and earned them a Brit award for Best International Group. Their success in the rest of Europe and in their home country has been equally good, with the latest album going platinum fifteen times over in Eire.

Despite their strong Irish connection, the band have shown a range which goes beyond the typical folk and torch songs that some might expect. Their singles have included a gorgeous cover version of Fleetwood Mac's Dreams which showed glimpses of vocals as good as the original. It was this single which helped launch them on their current upward path, leading to U.S. dates opening for the Rolling Stones and playing on Saturday Night Live.

The band's recent singles smashes have included Runaway and What Can I Do, mixing violin and bodhran with samplers, modern production and both acoustic and electric guitars. Both Glen Ballard and David Foster have featured as producers for the band, which accounts for the excellent production quality on that album and the smooth mix of modern and traditional. This theme – of mixing the contemporary and traditional – has continued into their videos, which tend to feature weathered exteriors and a rich layer of Celtic imagery. The same could be said of their website, which can be found as part of: http://www.atlantic-records.com/

"I really do hope that we can create our own niche," says Jim Corr, "but when I'm asked to describe our music, I always say that we're a traditional Irish pop-rock band, whatever that is."

An outdoor performance by the Corrs should be something really special, for this is a band in the fine tradition of the Glastonbury Sunday – guaranteed stress-free listening whatever the weather.

Ben Evans

FEEDER

YOU wouldn't want them living in the flat downstairs. Ear-bleeding riffs, blistering drums and tremors of chunky noise.

They are called Feeder. Two are British, one is Japanese. And they lurk in the twilight world between indie success and true fame.

They are one of the hardest working groups in the world — last year, they performed 93 gigs in the U.S. alone, after being tipped as the next Brit band to break America.

Their music is Kerrang headbanging meets indie inventiveness.

Feeder was born when singer-songwriter Grant Nicholas met Jon Lee, the drummer, in Cardiff. The trio was completed by Take Hirose, a jazz-loving bassist playing in Tokyo's heavy metal bands, who advertised in London free paper Loot.

They signed to Echo in 1995, and released mini-album Swim a year later, off which came "Cement", described by Melody Maker as "the most perfect four minutes of pop noise ever written".

Cynics may suggest that the Beach Boys' I Get Around or Nirvana's Smells Like Teen Spirit deserved that particular accolade, but we can forgive a little journalistic over-excitement.

Tours with Reef and Terrorvision followed before the release of the debut album, Polythene, and breakthrough single High.

Now album number two is on the horizon, called Yesterday Went Too Soon, and although the release has been delayed, it will happen later this summer.

Jim Pickard

DOGSTAR

It wouldn't be Glastonbury without all the rumours and speculation, and the best policy is always to expect the unexpected...but will one of the World's most famous rock stars REALLY be appearing on the Other Stage?

We'll believe Keanu Reeves is there when we see him playing bass with Dogstar, and if he does, it's fair to assume the fee will be somewhat less than the n dollars he pocketed for The Matrix, the smash-hit action film that has put his rollercoaster career firmly on the up again.

Next up is Shooter, for which the fee is a handy n dollars, so whatever attracts him to the rock'n'roll lifestyle, it's probably not the money.

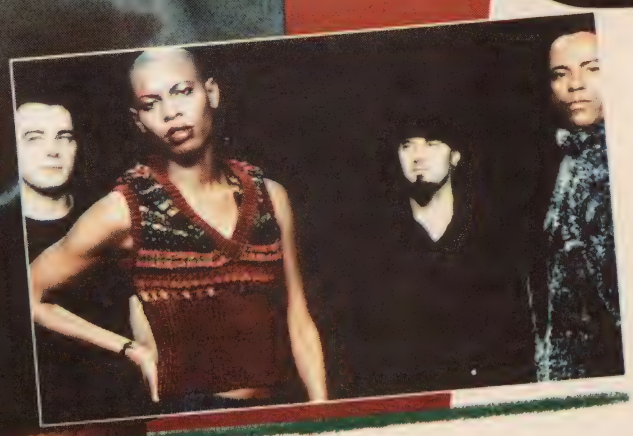
And anyway, he was into it enough to turn down Speed 11 — and a n dollar cheque — to tour with Dogstar. Not a bad decision in the end, as the film, set on a cruise liner, sank without trace.

At 34, Keanu says he's an actor not a rock star, but "playing music and hanging out with my friends is just a real good time".

If he does turn up playing music at Glastonbury, then, like Sean Lennon last year, people will come out of curiosity. If they go away talking about the music, and not the film star, something really extraordinary will have happened.

A voice the size of a bus, but with soooooo much control

it can throttle back to a whimper



skunk anansie

OUT in the real world, out of cloistered recording studios, you have the spot-lit arena of sweat, set lists and mosh pits that is a real live gig. There it boils down to this. There are bands that never sound as good on record as they do when playing live. And there are bands that never sound as good live as they do on the record. Bad venues and sloppy production can sometimes mask things to a certain extent, but after a few gigs, a few records, you can tell right enough. It's all down to the actual experience.

Too many bands just go out there and do their thing. Bish bosh, slip slap, lovely; and don't forget your band posters on the way out. Fine, great, probably a great gig bouncing around enjoying the music, apart from the four or so stroppy sods up on stage spoiling it for everyone.

Other bands put so much into their live performances that listening to their CDs straight after a gig is like suddenly going colour-blind. Everything's there, but it's just not the same. And whilst that poster might still find its way home if it looks good, you don't really need it. The gig's seared into your brain just as deeply as the cheesy post-gig grin that's chiselled across your face.

Skunk Anansie are a case in point. Their new album, Post Orgasmic Chill, probably represents their live sound better than either Paranoid and Sunburnt (1995) or Stoosh (1996), but it doesn't hold a candle to the real thing. Call me old-fashioned, but it's so nice to see a band get excited about what their doing, and live, Skunk Anansie are as infectious as Ebola River Virus. And it's not just 'cause they jump around a lot; playing live lifts their sound up that extra notch.

On stage the focus inevitably settles on Skin. If you bolted her to the mike stand her voice alone would rivet attention to her. Anyone familiar with singles such as Weak, I Can Dream, Brazen (Weep) or Charlie Big Potato (the first single off their new album) can testify to her ability to sing, scream and smoulder her little heart out. A voice the size of a bus, but with soooooo much control it can throttle back to a whimper.

However, you would have to bolt Skin to the mike stand to make her stay still. The fact that she sings the way she does whilst whirling around the stage like some dervish defies belief at times. You want stage presence? Put it this way. Skin is not the world's tallest person by any stretch – maybe around 5'4" of whipcord muscle with big boots, a bobble hat and the largest mouth you've ever seen. But she seems about 6'7" on stage. Maybe it's that smile.

The rest of the band are equally animated, the rapport between them speaking of many, many gigs, forging the band into a formidably tight unit on stage. They're so in tune with each other they probably scratch each other's itches without even being asked to.

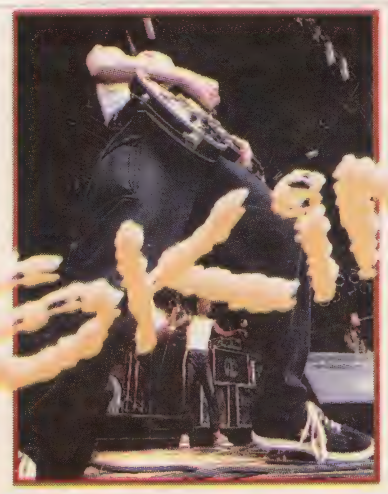
For some reason, Skunk Anansie have never had the easiest of relationships with the music press. It almost seems that it's okay to be political if you're Welsh and straight, but less than okay if you're black and otherwise. Either that, or their brand of 'Heavy Metal' simply isn't cool enough. Fortunately the fact they've never been hailed as the next big thing has done very little to harm the sales of their records (and probably a lot to protect them). In fact their first single completely bypassed the standard routine of record deal, single, and enough PR releases to choke a horse, by coming off the back of a Radio One session. Little Baby Swastika (1994) went down so well with the people listening that the BBC released it as a single.

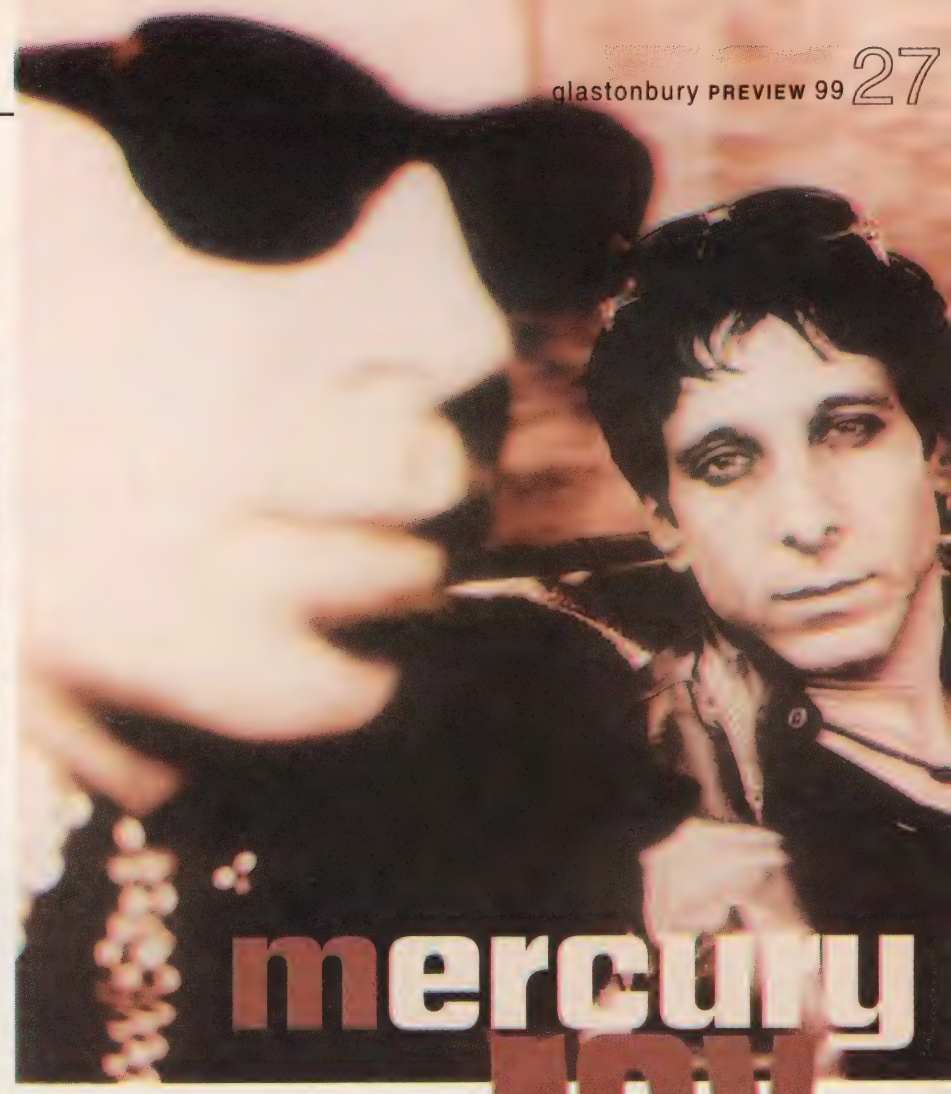
The political content and force of that first single have typified the band's style. But, if you just class them as a 'Heavy Metal' band you oversimplify them. Their repertoire of songs has more soul and funk than a year's subscription to Kerrang!, and more atmosphere than the planet Jupiter.

The latest album spreads the net a bit further. The politics tend now to be more of a poke in the ribs than a slap round the face. There's a bit of sitar there, a bit of drum 'n' bass here, which all fits in well, but is a rather unoriginal way of making their sound 'current', especially as it's a bit 1997. But it's still Skunk Anansie.

They might not necessarily be your cup of tea, they're not the best band in the Universe, but they'll probably play one of the most memorable, involving and fun sets you'll see at the festival.

Gyles Williams





mercury rev

IT has been a strange journey for Mercury Rev – from the psychedelic guitars of early albums (through numerous line-up changes, breakdowns and break-ups) to the sublime delicate beauty of Deserter's Songs, which found its way to the top (or thereabouts) of album of the year polls everywhere in 1998.

Forming ten years ago in Buffalo, USA, they began by picking up their instruments and playing along to wildlife documentaries for a laugh. From this initial accidental 'session' came the song Sleepy Rivers.

Then in 1990, with Jonathan Donahue taking on the role of the Flaming Lips' 2nd guitarist for a couple of years and Dave Fridmann co-producing their 1990 album (In A Priest Driven Ambulance), the Rev took the opportunity to slip into the Lips' studio between recording and lay down their first album.

They went on to release three albums prior to Deserter's Songs (Yerself is Steam, See you on the Other Side, Boces), with songs like 'Car Wash Hair' memorable contributions to a more feedback orientated scene. Formerly big on the festival circuit (they have played Glastonbury before), various splits and rifts have seen line-up changes and self-destruction inherent in their make up.

Their third album, See you on the Other Side, was an indication of the change in direction (after the departure of David Baker), with a lighter, more tranquil air.

Although the heavy atmosphere had evaporated, things promptly went downhill. Sony (their record label) didn't like the album (it wasn't enough like Soul Asylum!) and the band lost the plot.

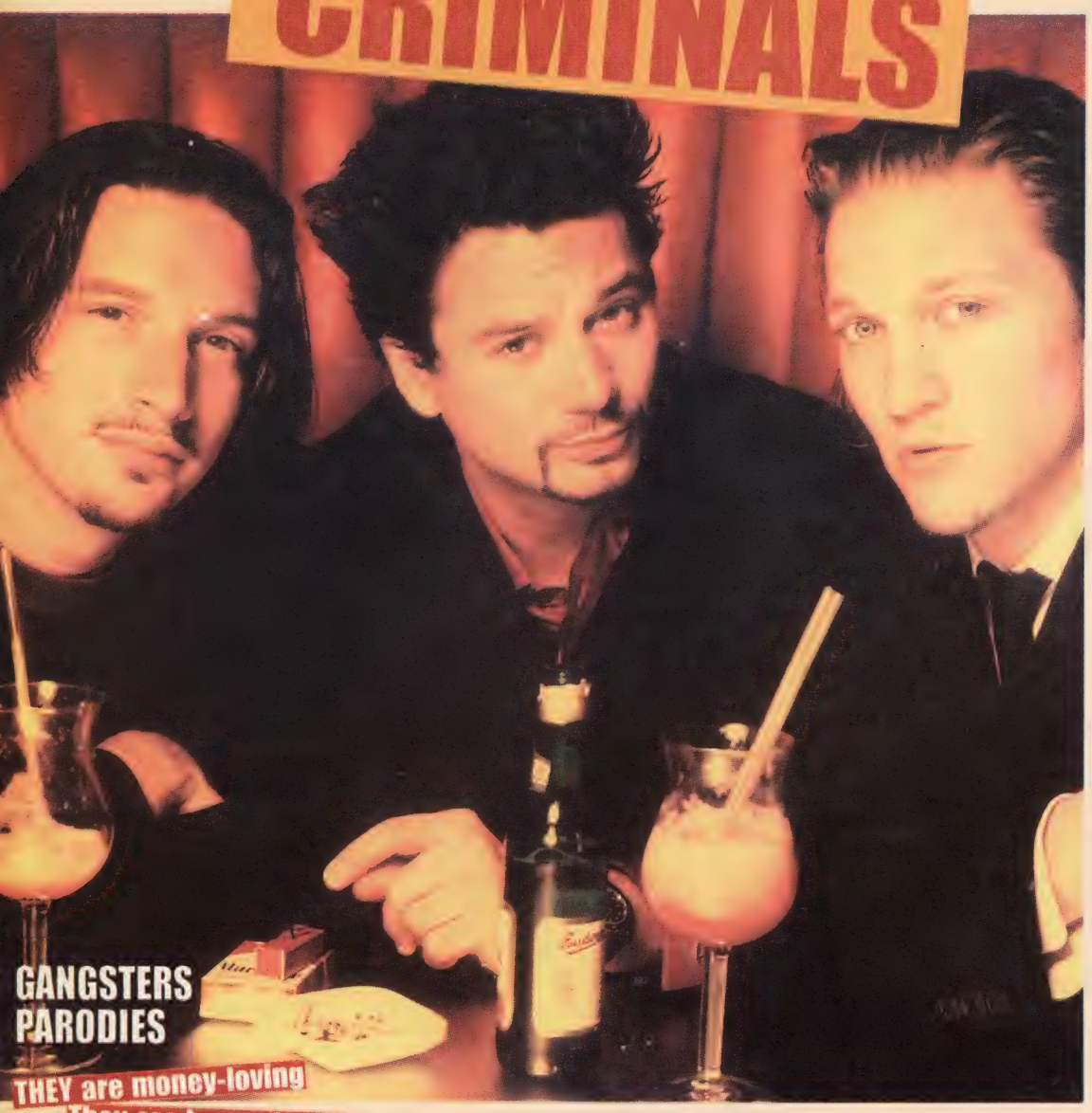
That is, until two years later when they began work on Deserter's Songs with the core members (Fridmann, Donohue, Grasshopper) and various new members and friends. Snapped up by V2, the success of the album was a surprise to the label and the band – they were seen as influential but not really likely to hit the big time.

Getting their masterpiece long player out a year before their friends the Flaming Lips (the Lips have just released a contender for album of 1999, The Sonic Bulletin), Mercury Rev have rightfully moved up the rankings of alternative guitar music and are nearing the top of the bill.

Recent UK tours have sold out, and they are a live force to be reckoned with once more. Television appearances (NME tour, Jools Holland) have augmented their live presence, critical acclaim is universal and once again things look rosy for the Rev. Anyone who has heard the splendour of songs like Holes and (recent single) Opus 40 will surely not be able to resist the pull of seeing them at Glastonbury – see you down the front!

Gareth Scurlock

FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS



THEY are not the Fine Young Cannibals. They are the Fun Lovin' Criminals, and they know how to hold a party, yessiree!

Rock 'n' Roll can be an earnest affair. Too many tars, surrounded by yes-men and hangers-on, end up taking themselves very, very seriously.

They believe their skill on the guitar or at the mike brings with it a God-given right to start preaching.

But Huey, Fast and new member Mackie won't be lecturing the Glastonbury faithful on the plight of Slovakian orphans and whales.

Instead, they will get down and rock. And roll. And they will funk. And groove. They will even crack jokes – funny ones.

And they will leave their fans – and anyone else within 100 metres of the XXX Stage – jumping up in the air with rhythm throbbing through their veins.

FLC music is cruising music, sunshine music, party music – hyperactive then relaxed by turn. It's an eclectic mix of styles; joyfully welding hip-hop with grunge guitar, or moody jazz with rap, or punk with elevator music.

Rock purists call them a hip-hop act. Rappers label them a rock act. Their fans know they are blindingly good, and that's all that matters.

If you think you've never heard their music think again; the Mercedes advert music (Fun Lovin' Criminals theme), Barry White Saved My Life (Love Unlimited), and King of New York, for instance. All toe-tapping, slow-rapping, milk-lapping cool cat sounds.

Because Fun Lovin' Criminals are cool. They are so cool they'd make a cucumber seem like a Mexican chilli pepper. They have built their image on slick hair, good looks and Martin Scorcese suits so sharp it's a wonder they don't shred themselves to bits.

And they are Big Apple through and through – they are to New York as Cilla Black is to Liverpool. Their lyrics are about cruisin', robbin', hangin' out with supermodels, smokin' reefers and drivin' flash cars .

The cod-gangsters sealed their success with debut album Come Find Yourself, which included King of New York and Scoobie Snacks, wild tributes to hedonism.

Their follow-up, 100% Columbian – referring to coffee, the band claimed – was a more mature, mellow affair. A bit over-produced, some said, but the humour, the deep groove and the sheer variety were still there.

Fun Lovin' Criminals – "the stars with guitars behind bars" – promise to be one of the most entertaining acts of the festival.

Let's just hope they can find decent grub from the food stalls – having claimed in the past that decent British food is as elusive as Nessie.

The trio will have just finished a gargantuan tour of Australia, the U.S., Europe and London, but they guarantee an energy-charged show.

Miss them, and you could be missing the gig of the year.

Jim Pickard

THE GREEN MAN Al Green

IF Al Green was given a dollar for every child conceived to the sound of his soul records he would now be a millionaire. Probably.

Green's tunes tend to accompany the sound of bras snapping, zips crackling and buttons popping in bedrooms from Paris to Peckham.

Snap. Crackle. Pop. Must be Al Green on the radio again.

Some seducers rely on the bass rumblings of Barry White, the so-called Walrus of Lurve. But Barry is the musical equivalent of fluffy red hearts and chocolate puppies, while Al is pure champagne.

A cool, light falsetto, soaring above a funky groove, with melodies as unforgettable as the Lord's Prayer.

A gospel singer who became an icon of the soul scene, Al sold 20 million records in his making-hay day. Songs such as I'm So Tired of Being Alone and I'm Still in Love With You were timeless ballads which could melt a thousand icy hearts.

And Let's Stay Together, immortalised in the Tarantino film Pulp Fiction, was as smooth as sorbet.

Music for those who have sought love, or lost love, found love or grown tired of love. Whatever.

It was between 1972 and 1973 that Green peaked, firing six consecutive singles into the Top Ten. And then, personal tragedy. In 1974, Al's girlfriend shot herself dead, and the hits dried up.

In 1979, he fell off a stage in mid-song, believed it was a sign from God and decided to dump soul and return to the arms of gospel music.

It was The Belle Album in 1977, packed with religious songs, which marked Green's return to his Christian roots.

And he has since spent his time as pastor of the Full Gospel Tabernacle in Memphis, recording little but religious music – although an unlikely duet with Annie Lennox returned him to the Top 20 in 1988.

His latest album, Your Heart's In Good Hands, was his first secular long player for two decades.

But this weekend the Reverend should be singing about both kinds of love, holy and unholy, to keep the Glastonbury fans on their feet.

"Whenever I've done shows, I've had to include hits like Let's Stay Together and Tired of Being Alone because that is what the people want to hear," he says.

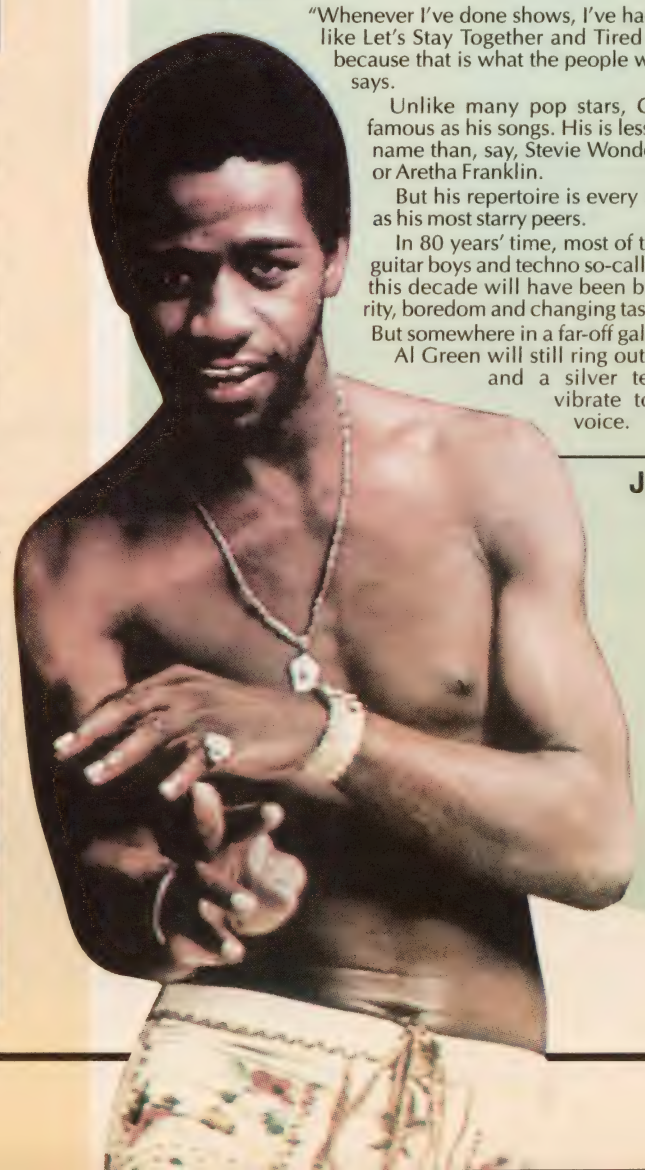
Unlike many pop stars, Green is not as famous as his songs. His is less of a household name than, say, Stevie Wonder, James Brown or Aretha Franklin.

But his repertoire is every bit as legendary as his most starry peers.

In 80 years' time, most of the indie-fringed guitar boys and techno so-called "pioneers" of this decade will have been buried by obscurity, boredom and changing tastes.

But somewhere in a far-off galaxy, the voice of Al Green will still ring out loud and clear, and a silver techno-bed will vibrate to his heavenly voice.

Jim Pickard



Mogwai

FIVE young men, very much from Glasgow. They defiantly pronounce "We don't have choruses – art forms have to progress". Their remix of his track Don't Die Just Yet so impressed DJ David Holmes that he named his Belfast bar after them. They're warping guitar strings and bending the minds of the nation's youth like no other band around. This is Mogwai. Don't argue.

The legends people invoke to describe the Mogwai sound (Spacemen 3, The Velvet Underground, Joy Division, My Bloody Valentine) have all engendered similar levels of fanaticism. Accordingly, their music continues to loom large across the ages. Mogwai are already a band with a similarly loyal following, so what riches lie in their music to reward the adventurous listener?

The crucial three of Stuart Braithwaite (guitar), Dominic Aitchison (bass) and Martin Bulloch (drums) originally quit their respective Glasgow bands in late 1995 and came together with the intention of creating some of the greatest guitar music that it was possible to make. After all, if you're going to have a concept, make it a good one, eh? As Stuart has commented, "I think a lot of people make art-rock, but forget to actually rock they're too busy arting. We're a rock'n'roll band that avoids cliches."

Another guitarist, John Cummings, soon arrived to help further shape the Mogwai sound, which then started to surface commercially on a succession of wilfully obscure singles released on wilfully obscure record labels. Limited releases in beautiful sleeves, impossible to find even then, on labels like Wurlitzer Jukebox and Che helped create the grass-roots buzz that carried Mogwai's sound down the wires and into the cerebellum of the sonically curious. This turned Mogwai into "Indie Top Ten Hit Kids" - even if it did all start with a split-single with what Mogwai describe as "the frankly appalling Dweeb".

The awesome scope of early songs like Lower and New Paths to Helicon, coupled with the ethereal imagery of the sleeves that housed them, created an intriguing atmosphere. Glasgow's premier independent label, Chemikal Underground, saw fit to offer Mogwai a permanent home and the neighbourliness of the local music scene also offered a fifth, ad-hoc, member in the shape of ex-Teenage Fanclub/Telstar Pony's homey Brendan O'Hare.

Work began on the debut LP and, in true Mogwai fashion, for the recording all adopted a pseudonym and each member (bar Brendan) shaved their head. The suedeheaded Mogwai now consisted of Capt. Meat, Bionic, pLasmatroN, Demonic and The Relic. The result of all this was the record Mogwai Young Team, the title inspired by Glasgow gang graffiti. Carrying on the good work of the singles, MYT crept in with Yes, I am a Long Way From Home and exited through the flames of Mogwai Fear Satan, persuading 35,000 UK citizens to lend an ear to their ambition in the process. Shortly after the record's completion, however, O'Hare left the band to concentrate on his Macrocosmica project.

Spending much of 1998 on tour kept Mogwai out of the studio in the traditional sense, but the electronic aspect of the band rose to the fore with the remix project Kicking a Dead Pig. Such projects risk redundancy, but asking sympathetic artists such as Arab Strap, Third Eye Foundation and Kid Loco to lend their skills helped create a companion to MYT, not a curiosity. Awareness was also on the agenda, as the band took on Glasgow city council and the draconian decision to introduce a nightfall curfew for kids of school age. The abrasive No Education = No Future (F*** The Curfew) EP certainly made Mogwai's feelings clear.

In the midst of all this, ex-music teacher Barry Burns joined, bringing with him some keyboards and a flute. Still five alive, Mogwai absconded to Tarbox Studios in rural New York State to join Dave Fridman (producer of Mercury Rev's Deserter Songs LP). With the resultant Come On, Die Young album (another Glasgow gang phrase), Mogwai are ready to burn holes through retinas, craniums, speakers and stages the world over. All the best bands have a mission, a personal or collective vision that exists beyond the realms of charts and finance and which transcends the workaday aspirations of most young bands. Mogwai have a vision – this is your chance to share it. This is Mogwai. Don't argue.

Joseph Rebane

lenny kravitz

LENNY Kravitz? The tattooed "Let Love Rule" guy with the nose rings. The guy Spin magazine called a "new hippy with an old soul". The one everyone initially called "Mr Bonet" on account of his (now ex) wife Lisa. That MTV heavy-rotation video with the giant light show for Are You Gonna Go My Way? Didn't he recently have a massive single on account of Peugeot cars? Got lucky, I guess.

All of the above is true – except for the last bit. It might be tempting to say Lenny owes a debt to Peugeot, it being their 206 ad that his song Fly Away soundtracked in a million UK homes. But the funk-rock, Sly Stone-styled song had already broken radio records in Kravitz's native America and was nominated for a Grammy well before its TV exposure in this country. Taken from his fifth album (er, "5"), it has single-handedly pushed Lenny Kravitz back under the global spotlight, somewhere he may or may not be comfortable but certainly a place he's been before.

It's always been about the music with Lenny Kravitz, not the "drama and hoopla and hype and all this rock star shit", so now we have the electric funk and dirty grooves of "5". Almost in keeping with the stripped simplicity of the new songs, even the Marley-style dreadlocks worn on the albums sleeve have since disappeared. In some ways, "5" is a record that reveals more about Kravitz's roots and inspirations than his Let Love Rule debut. From the throbbing pulse of Black Velveteen to the smokin' funk of Live and the swingbeat-oriented Just Can't Say No, if the Kravitz influences can be distilled to three names – Prince, John Lennon, Sly Stone – then they're all here. Not so much wearing his heart on his sleeve as making a whole shirt of them.

Of course, his ability to create an effective homage to his heroes has been the critical bane of his life. But Kravitz always brings something of himself to the party, adding a little Lenny to garnish his musical bouillabaisse. If his inspiration still comes from the late Sixties, its because, as he has long maintained, there hasn't been a better guitarist since Hendrix or anyone with the funk like James Brown. At the same time, he's no stranger to the sounds of today's dancefloor. His most famous extra-curricular work is still the song he wrote for Madonna, the sparse breakbeat of Justify My Love, appropriately enough now the anthem of a thousand strip clubs (although don't be expecting him to attempt it during his Glastonbury set!). His ability to breath new life into old grooves and put an organic spin on 21st Century synthesised chill has also seen him collaborating with Mick Jagger, Aerosmith, Vanessa Paradis, Brandy, Sean Lennon and, most recently, Chicago.

An eclectic mix by any stretch of the imagination, ranging as it does from rock to soul, but that's pretty much a Lenny Kravitz album in a nutshell. Kravitz himself freely admits "I am just a musician and I don't think until people come to see me live that they get a sense of that". He maintains a regular band for touring, the majority of which have been with him for six years, and if you only need one reason to see Lenny Kravitz live then don't miss the riveting spectacle that is Cindy Blackman, an incredible drummer sporting possibly the largest afro since the Jackson 5's heyday.

Rolling Stone magazine captured the spirit of Kravitz by suggesting that he "courts artistic disaster by continually invoking his betters. What saves him is a tried-and-true rock and roll virtue: this boy can ignite a groove". Much as his detractors decry him for his retro roots, there's no denying that his songs come from the heart, something you just can't fake. He's at his best in a live situation when the band is tight, the music's right and, for that moment, Lenny Kravitz is out of sight. If anyone embodies the original spirit of the Glastonbury Festival, it's him. A determined idealist, he declares "I believe in peace. I believe in getting along, all of us being as one. I'm into the world coming together".

Unity? In his own small way, in every sweaty, crowded venue he plays, Lenny Kravitz achieves just that.

Jonathon Wilson

WITCHERS COOKIES

GIANT AMERICAN COOKIES
COLD SOFT DRINKS
FRESH FILTER COFFEE
TASTE'S GOOD ANYTIME!
ALL AT STAND F2/05
ASK FOR DAVID

FOR SILVER & BODY PIERCING JEWELLERY AND THROWS
See Jimmy on Stand J2/10C
OR AT
CAMDEN MARKET EVERY WEEKEND
CALL 0171 485 4177 for a brochure
or write to 88/90 CAMBDEN RD, LONDON NW1 9DY

Philippine Village Fast Food Centre
Nayong Pilipino
Interest in food is indeed expanding world wide, so we are committed to provide the best quality oriental food.
Our menus comprises with fine dishes from Southeast Asia, inspired by Filipino and Singaporean taste of food. Come and see us at the market **C2/04 Glastonbury Festival.**
New this year for vegetarians & vegans
MASALA DOSAI
Come and Try!
When you want to plan a dinner part or any catering event, just give us a call and we're ready to serve you.
401 New Cross Road
London SE14 6LA
Telephone: 0181-691 7781
Fax no. 0181 691 7781
Mobile: 0956-597041
(premium rates apply)

FRIENDS OF ST JOHN
RAISING FUNDS FOR THE SCHOOL GARDEN and PLAY EQUIPMENT
Come & visit us on
F4/03
Chilled foods and drinks

manufacturers of the glastonbury festival t-shirts
Taking Care Of Business
TCB Inc.
manufacture, print and distribution of t-shirts to the music industry. inc. tour, wholesale and retail.
bands inc:
BILLY BRAGG
DODGY
DREADZONE
EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL
FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS
MEDIAEVAL BAEBES
PHISH
SPEARHEAD
+ MANY MORE
corporate work:
CHRYSALIS
EMI
PARLAPHONE
MTV
UNIVERSE
VIRGIN...
tel: 0171 511 5775
fax: 0171 511 5657
http://www.tcbinc.demon.co.uk
e-mail: orders@tcbinc.demon.co.uk

TANTRA
DESIGNS
A WIDE RANGE OF CELTIC & MYSTICAL GIFTS
D Market, By the Pyramid Stage
48 Kensington Pk Rd, Bristol, BS4 3HU
Ring for a FREE catalogue - 0117 9724708

THAI BYCEE
Find us at E4/09.
Delicious Authentic Thai Food.
For a real taste of the East.
Thai Bycee.

SHOW & EXHIBITION
23-25 JULY 1999
ROYAL BATH & WEST SHOWGROUND, SOMERSET
Set to be the biggest and most exciting event of its kind, combining over 200 exhibitors for all types of equipment, clothing, services, clubs and holidays in the adventure sports industry. Over 3 days the event will feature:
3 MASSIVE INDOOR ARENAS & SHOW EXPO * PRO SNOWBOARDING DISPLAY RAMP
SAILING, WINDSURF AREA, JET-SKI RACING * SURFERS BEACH AREA
NIGHT GLOW HOT AIR BALLOON SPECTACULAR * MOUNTAIN BIKE COURSE
BMX RAMPS & GT BMX STUNT TEAM * AWESOME 280FT EJECTION SEAT
INDOOR CLIMBING WALL * 4X4 AREA * SKATEBOARD & INLINE AREA
RAIDERS SKYDIVING TEAM * LATE NIGHT OUTDOOR CINEMA * SKAD DROP
BUNGEE JUMPING * HELICOPTER RIDES * FREE FALL SIMULATOR
GT Bicycles airshow
EVENING ENTERTAINMENT UNTIL 2AM, FSUK DJ'S AND LIVE MUSIC STAGE, OUTDOOR LATE NIGHT CINEMA, THEMED BEER TENTS, COMEDY ZONE BAR, RESTAURANTS, FAIRGROUND, LASER SHOW & FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR, FOOD STALLS, CAMPSITE WITH SHOWERS
Day Ticket: Adult £8.50 (+bf), Children 8-14 £4.50 (+bf).
W/end Ticket inc. camping: Adults £13.50 (+bf), Children 8-14 £7.00 (+bf).
TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM: BRISTOL TIC: 0117 9260767.
50-50 Skateboard: 01179 147783. Green Room Surf: 01179 291033
Credit Card Hotline call: 0115 912 9000
24hr Information Hotline: 0906 5531221
Exhibitors/Concessions Call: 01908 373367
Quest ADVENTURE SAILING www.globaledl.co.uk
venue bristol & bath's magazine
Galaxy 101
02:50
SAS 01872 553001

331
FOR ALL YOUR LEATHER CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES
Visit Stand F1/12
or
331 Garratt Lane
Wandsworth
LONDON SW18 4DX
0181 870 6638

buy a Jack - get a coffee or tea FREE!
jack SHACK sunfood
FOOD — Jacks. Delicious - with chicken, beef, prawns, chick-peas or strawberries. They're tasty, filling, healthy and great value. Spicy Soup. Icy Sorbets. Fruit Cake. Frozen Yoghurts.
DRINKS — Filter Coffee, Fresh Teas, Fruit Juice, Cold Cans, Hot Chocolate and Water.
Where? — Somerset Boulevard. Market D. (By the Main Stage)

ISLAND CATERING
Winner of RADIO 1's Oriental Food Stall 1997
See WOK'S COOKING At Stand J3/0S Speak to Jon

Jewellery, Clocks, Mirrors and more in the Craft Field - or come to the
BRIGHTON DESIGNERS & MAKERS Shop
at:- 39 Sydney Street, Brighton BN1 4EP
Tel: 01273 671212
Open Mon - Sat 10am - 6pm

For All Your Jewellery
GIFTS & T-SHIRTS
See Douglas @
J3/09
or
24, VICTORIA STREET
EDINBURGH
SCOTLAND
EH1 1JH
0131 225 4413

Watch out, there's a moron about

GLASTONBURY may sometimes feel like paradise with no rules or regulations. However, the law does apply here. Theft and drug abuse both take place, and offenders of either will be punished if caught.

PC Gordon Chisholm works for the Crime Reduction Unit of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary, which has produced a Festival Survival Guide.

He said: "Sometimes a small minority spoil the fun. So look after your property, yourself and your friends. We are there if you need us."

The police have a wealth of advice for both festival virgins and old hands.

It is easy to forget amid the sunshine (fingers crossed) and the music that many professional thieves are around.

Get to know the people camping around you, and agree to keep an eye on each other's tents.

Mark your property with your postcode and house number, and be inventive when hiding keys and wallets.

If you lose something, check at Found Property which is at the Wagon Shed next to Worthy Farm.

If you see someone in your tent, do not challenge them, but tell security or police and remember a brief description of the offender.

Police are this year worried about the new 24-hour cash point, and people are advised to bring friends when taking money out.

"It is the classic crime, walking away from a cash point and being mugged, so to avoid that don't go on your own," advised information co-ordinator Stephen Abrahall.

Parents who bring children to the festival should never leave them in an unsupervised area; there is a supervised area on site.

The issue of drugs is always a major one. Many people believe that the festival is enough of a high in itself, but some people will still break the law and take drugs.

The festival survival guide advises people not to mix drugs with each other or with alcohol, and says: "Taking any drug is risky and does not guarantee a good time. The safest option is not to, mixing drugs just increases the risk."

And don't forget that illegal drugs are illegal, and even a small quantity of cannabis could get you into trouble with the police.

The benefits of sunscreen . . .

In the unlikely event of the weather being good (ie not constant rain for three days) do not overlook the potential for serious discomfort caused by the sun. Apart from the longer term health hazards, sunburn on lily white skin can mess up your entire weekend. Think safe, think sunscreen.

Don't forget to buy your perfect souvenir

GLASTONBURY 99 LIVE
on sale from Sunday

ARMY & NAVY UK LTD

SITE: MARKETS J504/D405

SPECIALISING IN WHOLESALE & RETAIL ALL WEATHER CLOTHING ie:

Waterproofs, Boots, Trousers, Shorts, Tops, T-Shirts, Singlets as well as Tents, Sleeping Bags and Rucksacks

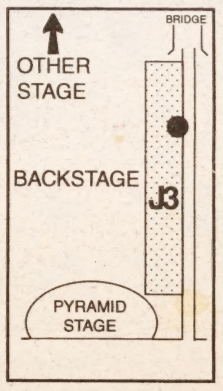
SHOPS:

222 Camden Town High St, London NW1 Tel: 0171 424 0596
223 Camden Town High St, London NW1 Tel: 0171 267 1939
32 Chapel Market, Islington, London N1 Tel: 0171 833 4805
375 North End Road, Fulham, London SW6 Tel: 0171 610 3577

Wholesale Warehouse Tel: 0171 5389392

OR CALL 0171 485 4590

frontier FOOTWEAR

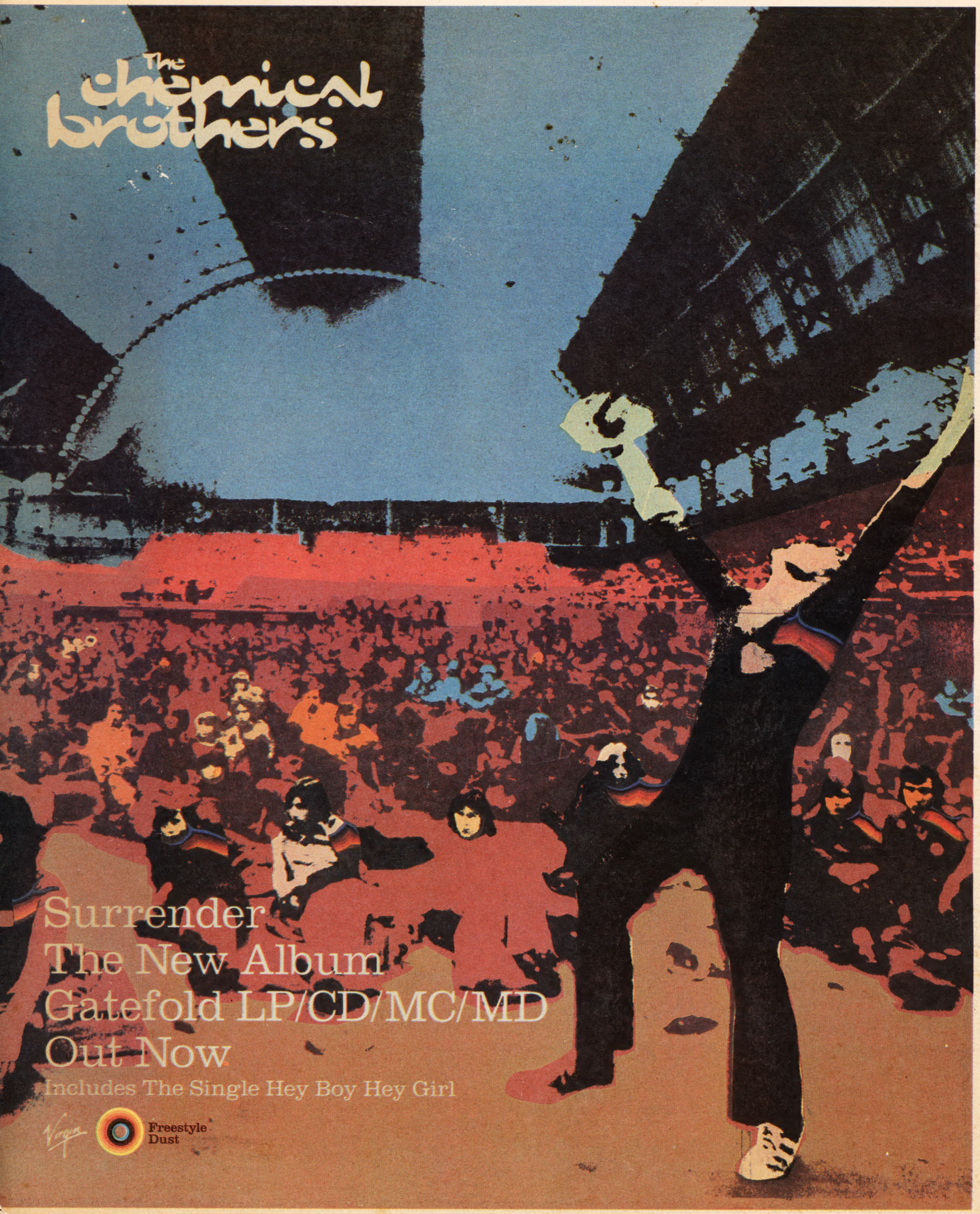


Do your feet a favour and take them along to stall J3/21 to sample the latest in trainers from the likes of

AIRWALK, NEW BALANCE and **ADIDAS.**

Amazing prices you won't find in the shops.

new balance AIRWALK FOOTWEAR



A Western Daily Press Special Publication. Published by Bristol Evening Post and Press Ltd. Printed by Western Newspaper Printers Ltd, at Temple Way, Bristol, BS99 7HD